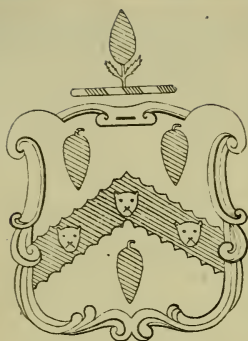


# LADIES IN THE FIELD



EDITED BY  
THE LADY GREVILLE



*Arthur Perrin*



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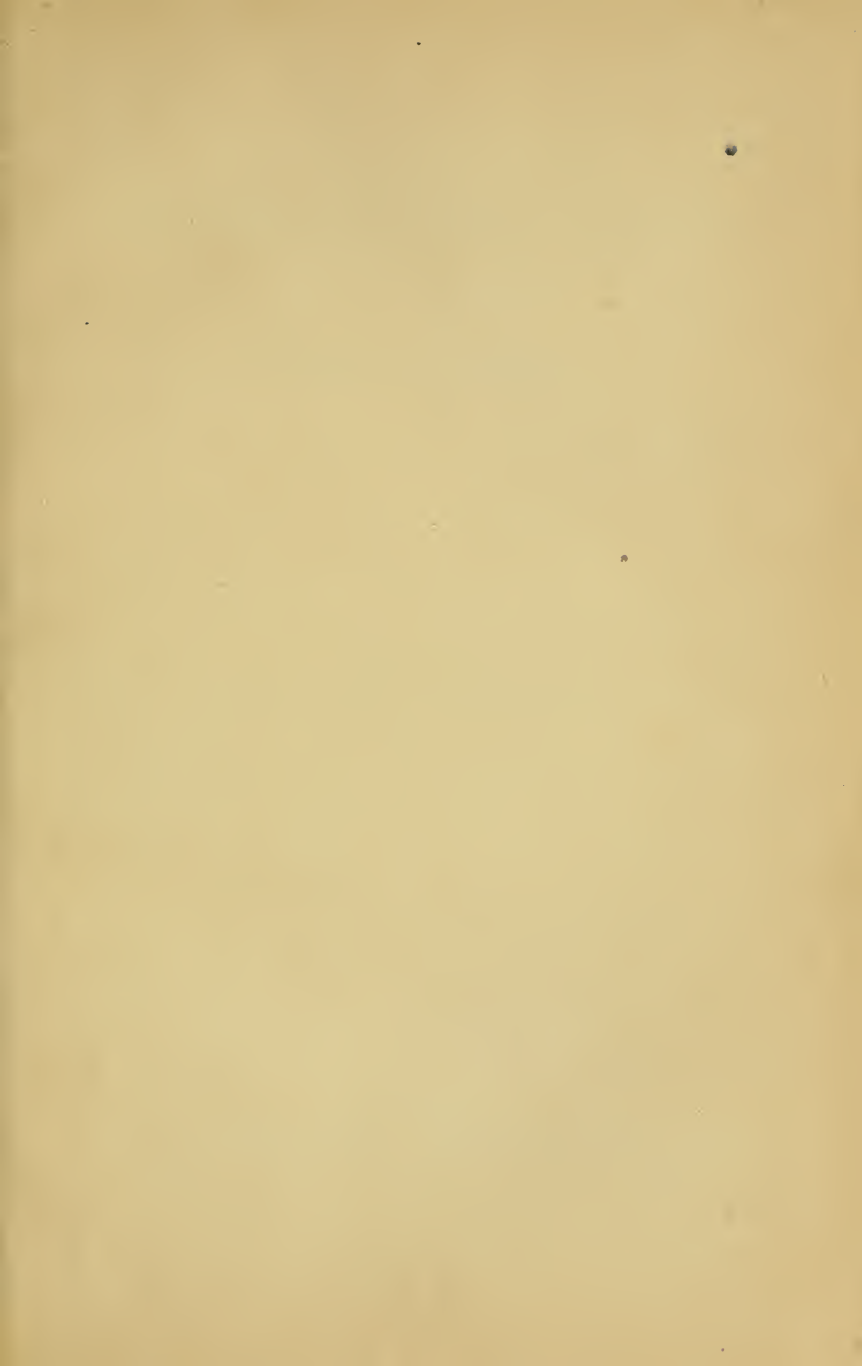


JOHN A. SEAVERN

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# LADIES IN THE FIELD

Sketches of Sport

EDITED BY  
THE LADY GREVILLE

NEW YORK  
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## P R E F A C E.



It is scarcely necessary nowadays to offer an apology for sport, with its entrancing excitement, its infinite variety of joys and interests. Women cheerfully share with men, hardships, toil and endurance, climb mountains, sail on the seas, face wind and rain and the chill gusts of winter, as unconcernedly as they once followed their quiet occupations by their firesides. The feverish life of cities too, with its enervating pleasures, is forgotten and neglected for the witchery of legitimate sport, which need not be slaughter or cruelty. Women who prefer exercise and liberty, who revel in the cool sea breeze, and love to feel the fresh mountain air fanning their cheeks

who are afraid neither of a little fatigue nor of a little exertion, are the better, the truer, and the healthier, and can yet remain essentially feminine in their thoughts and manners. They may even by their presence refine the coarser ways of men, and contribute to the gradual disuse of bad language in the hunting-field, and to the adoption of a habit of courtesy and kindness. The duties of the wife of the M.F.H. fully bear out this view.

When women prove bright and cheerful companions, they add to the man's enjoyment and to the enlarging of their own practical interests. When, in addition, they endeavour to love Nature in her serenest and grandest moods, to snatch from her mighty bosom some secrets of her being, to study sympathetically the habits of birds, beasts and flowers, and to practise patience, skill, ingenuity and self-reliance, they have learnt valuable lessons of life.

Lastly, in the words of a true lover of art :  
“ The sportsman who walked through the  
turnip fields, thinking of nothing but his dog  
and his gun, has been drinking in the love of  
beauty at every pore of his invigorated frame,  
as, from each new tint of autumn, from every  
misty September morning, from each variety  
of fleeting cloud, each flash of light from  
distant spire or stream, the unnoticed in-  
fluence stole over him like a breeze, bring-  
ing health from pleasant places, and made  
him capable of clearer thoughts and happier  
emotions.”

VIOLET GREVILLE.





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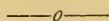
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RIDING IN IRELAND AND  
INDIA.



# LADIES IN THE FIELD.



## RIDING IN IRELAND AND INDIA.

BY THE LADY GREVILLE.

OF all the exercises indulged in by men and women, riding is perhaps the most productive of harmless pleasure. The healthful, exhilarating feeling caused by rapid motion through the air, and the sense of power conveyed by the easy gallop of a good horse, tends greatly to moral and physical well-being and satisfaction. Riding improves the temper, the spirits and the appetite; black shadows and morbid fancies disappear from the mental horizon, and wretched indeed must he be who can preserve a gloomy or discontented frame of mind during a fine run in a grass country, or even in a sharp, brisk gallop over turfy downs. Such being

the case, no wonder that the numbers of horsemen increase every day, and that the hunting field, from the select company of a few country squires and hard-riding young men, has developed into an unruly mob of people, who ride over the hounds, crush together in the gateways, and follow like a flock of sheep through the gaps and over the fences, negotiated by more skilful or courageous sportsmen. Women, too, have rushed in where their mothers feared to tread. Little girls on ponies may be seen holding their own nobly out hunting, while Hyde Park, during the season, is filled with fair, fresh-looking girls in straw hats, covert coats and shirts, driving away the cobwebs of dissipation and the deleterious effects of hot rooms by a mild canter in the early morning. Unfortunately, though a woman never looks better than on horseback, *when she knows how to ride*, the specimens one often encounters riding crookedly, all one side, to the inevitable detriment of the horse's back, bumping on the saddle like a sack of potatoes, or holding on with convulsive effort to the



horse's mouth, are sufficient to create a holy horror in the minds of reasonable spectators. Park-riding is not difficult compared with cross-country riding, yet how seldom do you see it perfect? To begin with, a certain amount of horsemanship is absolutely necessary. There must be art, and the grace that conceals art; there must be self-possession, quiet, and a thorough knowledge of the horse you are riding. Take, for instance, a fresh young hunter into the park for the first time. He shies at the homely perambulator, starts at the sound of cantering hoofs, is terrified by a water-cart, maddened by the strains of the regimental band, or the firing of the guards at their matutinal drill, and finally attempts to bolt or turn round as other horses, careering along, meet and pass him in a straggling gallop. If he backs, rears, kicks, shies and stops short, or wheels round suddenly, with ears thrown back, his rider need not be surprised. Horses cantering in every direction disturb, distress and puzzle him. On which side are the hounds? he wonders. Why does not his rider extend him? Where

are the fences, and when will the fun begin? These, no doubt, are some of the thoughts that pass through a well-bred hunter's mind, for that horses *do* reason in their own peculiar fashion I am convinced, and that they fully recognise the touch and voice of the master, no one can doubt who has noticed the difference in the behaviour of a hunter when ridden by different persons. If the park rider wishes for a pleasant conveyance I should strongly recommend a hack, neither a polo pony nor a cob. But where, oh where, are perfect hacks to be found? They should be handsome, well-bred, not quite thoroughbred, about 15·3, with fine shoulders, good action, and, above all, perfect mouth and manners. No Irish horse has manners, as a rule, until he comes to England, or has the slightest idea of bending and holding himself, owing to the fact of his being usually broken and ridden in a snaffle bridle. This practice has its uses, notably in that it makes the horses bold fencers, and teaches them not to be afraid of facing the bit, but it is not conducive to the development of a park hack,

which should be able to canter round a sixpence. I remember in my young days seeing Mr Mackenzie Greaves and Lord Cardigan riding in the park, the latter mounted on a beautiful chesnut horse, which cantered at the slowest and easiest of paces, the real proverbial arm-chair, with a beautifully arched neck, champing proudly at the bit, yet really guided as by a silken thread. *That* was a perfect hack, and would probably fetch now-a-days four or five hundred guineas. No lady ought to ride (if she wishes to look well) on anything else. Men may bestride polo ponies, or clatter lumberingly along on chargers, or exercise steeple-chase horses with their heads in the air, yawing at a snaffle; but, if a woman wants to show off her figure and her seat she should have a perfect hack, not too small, with a good forehand, nice action, and, above all, a good walker, one that neither fidgets nor shuffles nor breaks into a trot.

Bitting is, as a rule, not sufficiently considered. In the park, a light, double bridle, or what they call in Ireland a Ward bit, is the best, and no martingale should be required.

People often wonder why a horse does not carry his head in the right place. Generally, unless the horse is unfortunately shaped, this is the fault of the bit, sometimes it is too severe, or too narrow, which frets and irritates the horse's mouth. A horse with a very tender mouth will stand only the lightest of bits, and is what they call a snaffle-bridle horse, not always the pleasantest of mouths, at least out hunting; for I cannot think that a lady can really ever hold a horse well together over a deep country, intersected by stiff fences, with a snaffle, especially if he is a big horse with somewhat rolling action. It has been said by a great authority on riding that no horse's mouth is good enough for a snaffle, and no man's hands good enough for a curb. I remember the late Lord Wilton, one of the finest cross-country riders, telling me to be sure never to ride my horse on the curb over a fence. But, as I suppose there is no absolute perfection in horse or man, each rider must, to a certain extent, judge for himself, and ride different horses in different ways. But you may be sure of

this, that the biting of grooms is generally too severe, and the hands of a man who rides all his horses in martingales, snaffles, and complicated arrangements of bit and bridle, are sure to be wrong. The matter practically resolves itself into hands. They, after all, are the chief essentials in riding. The "Butcher" on horseback who tugs at his horse's head as if it were a bedpost, who loses his temper, who digs in the spurs incessantly, and generally has a fight with his horse over every fence, invariably possesses bad hands as well as a bad temper. I believe the reason that women who ride hard generally get fewer falls than men, is to be accounted for by the fact that they leave their horse's head alone, do not interfere with and bully him, and are generally on good terms with their mounts. For this reason I disapprove strongly of women riding with spurs, and think that in most cases *men* would be better without them. I had a personal experience of this once, when I one day lent a very clever hunter, who had carried me perfectly, to the huntsman. He rode her

with spurs, she went unkindly all day and refused several fences, a thing I had never known her do before. Many men are too fond of looking upon horses as machines, ignoring their wishes and peculiarities, whereas the true horseman is in thorough sympathy with the animal he bestrides, and contrives by some occult influence to inspire him with confidence and affection. A horse, bold as a lion with his master on his back, may very often refuse with a timid, nervous or weak rider. One man, like the late George Whyte Melville, can get the rawest of four-year-olds brilliantly over a country, while another finds difficulty even with an experienced hunter.

I believe thoroughly in kindness and gentleness in stable management. I would dismiss at once a groom or helper who hit, or swore at, or knocked about a horse. Horses are very nervous creatures, and keenly susceptible to affection. I had once a beautiful chestnut hunter, quite thoroughbred, and a perfect picture, with a small, beautifully-shaped head, and large, gentle eye. He had evidently been fearfully ill-treated, for, if any-

one came near him he would shrink into the corner of his box, tremble violently, and put his ears back from sheer nervousness. After a bit, seeing he was kindly treated, he learnt to follow me like a dog. Another mare, who came with the reputation of a vicious animal, and was supposed to bite all those who approached her, used, after a time, to eat nicely from my hand, much to the astonishment of her late master, who saw me go freely into her box. No man can be a really good rider who is not fond of horses, and does not care to study their peculiarities and tempers, and govern them rather by kind determination than by sheer ill-treatment.

A lady rider should look to her bit before she starts, see that the curb chain is not too tight, and the bit in the proper position. She should visit her horse daily, and feed him in the stable till he knows her voice as well as one of mine did who, on hearing it, would rise up on his hind legs and try to turn himself round in his stall whinnying with pleasure. And, above all, she should study her saddle.



Sore backs are the terrible curse of a hunting stable, and are generally produced by bad riding, hanging on to the stirrup, instead of rising when trotting, from the body, and sitting crooked on a badly-fitting saddle. The woman's seat should be a perfectly straight one. She should look, as she sits, exactly between the horse's ears, and, with the third pommel to give her assistance, she ought to maintain a perfect balance. Every lady's saddle should be made for her, as some women take longer saddles than others. The stuffing should be constantly seen to, and, while the girths are loosed, the saddle itself never taken off till the horse's back is cool. If it is a well-made saddle and does not come down too low on the withers, a horse should very rarely have a bad back. I have always preferred a saddle of which the seat was flat and, and in old days used to have mine stuffed a good deal at the back so as to prevent the feeling of riding uphill. Messrs Wilkinson & Champion now make saddles on that principle, on which one can sit most comfortably. Numnahs I do not care for, or if

they are used they should only be a thin leather panel, well-oiled, and kept soft and pliable.

No lady should hunt till she can ride, by which I mean, till she can manage all sorts of horses, easy and difficult to ride, till she knows how to gallop, how to jump, and is capable of looking after herself. Half the accidents in the hunting-field occur from women, who can scarcely ride, being put upon a hunter, and, while still perfectly inexperienced, told to ride to hounds. They may have plenty of courage but no knowledge. Whyte Melville depicts pluck as "a moral quality, the result of education, natural self-respect and certain high aspirations of the intellect;" and nerve "as a gift of nature, dependent on the health, the circulation and the liver. As memory to imagination in the student, so is nerve to pluck in the horseman." Women are remarkable for nerve, men for pluck. Women who ride are generally young and healthy. Youth is bold and inconsiderate of its danger. Yet few men or women have the cool courage of Jim Mason, who was seen

galloping down a steep hill in Leicestershire, the reins on his horse's neck, his knife in his mouth, mending the lash of his whip. In fact, a good deal of the hard riding one sees is often due to what is called "jumping powder," or the imbibing of liqueurs and spirits. For hard riding, it should never be forgotten, is essentially not good riding. The fine old sportsman, ripened by experience, who, while quietly weighing the chances against him, and perfectly aware of the risks he runs, is yet ready to face them boldly, with all the resources of a cool head and a wide knowledge, is on the high road to being a hero. These calm, unassuming, courageous men are those who make their mark on the field of battle, and to whom the great Duke of Wellington referred when he spoke of the hunting-field being the best school of cavalry in the world.

Most of us want to fly before we can walk. This vaulting ambition accounts for the contemptible spectacles that occasionally meet our sight. A city man, who has had half-a-dozen riding lessons, an enriched tradesman, or an unsportmanlike foreigner, must

needs start a stud of hunters. We all remember the immortal adventures of Jorrocks and Soapy Sponge, but how often do we see scenes quite as ludicrous as any depicted in Sartees' delightful volumes. Because everyone he knows goes across country, the novice believes fondly that he can do the same. He forgets that the real sportsman has ridden from earliest childhood; has taken his falls cheerfully off a pony; and learned how to ride without stirrups, often clinging on only bareback; has watched, while still a little chap in knickerbockers or white frocks, holding tight to the obliging nurse's hand, some of the mysteries of the stable; has seen the horses groomed and shod, physicked or saddled, with the keen curiosity and interest of childhood, and has grown up, as it were in the atmosphere of the stable. Every English boy, the son of a country gentleman, loves the scent of the hay, not perhaps poetically in the hay field, but practically in the manger. He knows the difference in the quality of oats, and the price of straw, the pedigree

of the colts, and the performances of the mares, long before he has mastered the intricacies of Euclid, or the diction of Homer. To ride is to him as natural as to walk, and he acquires a seat and hands as unconsciously as the foals learn to trot and jump after their mother; and consequently, as riding is an art eminently necessary to be acquired in youth, everything is in his favour, when in after life the poor and plucky subaltern pits himself on his fifty-guinea screw against the city magnate riding his four-hundred-guinea hunter. Fortunately this is so, for riding, while entrancing to its votaries, is also an expensive amusement; yet so long as a man has a penny in his pocket that he can legitimately dispose of for amusement, so long would one wish him to spend it thus, for the moral qualities necessary to make a good rider are precisely those which have given England her superiority in the rank of nations. The Irish with their ardent and enthusiastic natures, are essentially lovers of horses; and an Irish hunter is without exception the cleverest

in the world. He has generally a light mouth, always a leg to spare, and the nimbleness of a deer in leaping. *Apropos* of the latter quality, I remember the answer of an Irishman who was selling a horse, when asked if he could jump,—

“Is ’t lep, ye mane, yer honour? Well there never was a leper the likes of him!”

“Does he feed well?”

“Feed, yer honour? He’d fatten on a bowling alley!”

Hunting in Ireland, while rougher and more unconventional, is certainly safer than in England. The fences are big, but you do not as a rule ride so fast at them, and are therefore not so likely to get a bad fall; in addition, there is rarely if ever any timber to jump. But against that, there are a great many stone walls, and nasty big black ditches, called drains, which are boggy and unfathomable, and the banks of which are rotten; and there is no road riding possible, and few gates, while lanes are rare and far between. Nevertheless, I believe it is the best hunting country for ladies. It has no big hairy fences to

scratch your face and tear your habit, and no ox-rails; the country is grass and beautiful going; you can ride a horse a stone lighter than in England, and on a good bold horse you can go pretty nearly straight.

The vexed question of habits appears now to be one of the most serious matters, in consequence of the many accidents that have happened to ladies. When I began riding, we wore habits that tore if they caught, and, consequently, no one was ever hung up or dragged. The strong melton cloth of the present day does not give at all, and therefore is a source of great danger if the habit catches on the pommel. None of the so-called safety habits up to the present seem to be absolutely satisfactory, nor any of the dodges of elastic or safety stirrups. Mr. Scott, Jr., of South Molton Street, has invented the latest safety skirt, but this is in reality no habit at all, only an apron, and therefore can scarcely be called a skirt. One great security is to have no hem to the habit. Another is, to be a good rider (for the bad riders always fall on the off side, which is the reason their



habit catches on the crutch). The third is to have a habit made of tearable material; and this, I believe, is the only solution of the question, unless ladies decide definitely to adopt a man's dress. Meanwhile, I would impress upon all women the great danger of hunting, unless they are fully capable of managing their horses, choosing their own place at a fence, omitting to ride over their pilot, or to gallop wildly with a loose rein, charging every obstacle in front of them, and finally, unless they have some experience in the art of horsemanship.

Military men possess great advantages in the hunting field. To begin with, they are taught to ride, and probably have passed some years in India, where the exercise is commonly preferred to walking. Ladies of all ages and figures ride there, and, no doubt, in so doing, preserve their health and their looks. There is a peculiar charm in Indian riding. It is indulged in in the early morning, when the body is rested, the nerves strong, and the air brisk and fresh; or at eventide, when the heat of the day is over,



and a canter in the cool breeze seems peculiarly acceptable. How delightful are those early morning rides, when, after partaking of the refreshing cup of tea or coffee, your "syce" or groom brings the pawing steed to your door, and once in the saddle, you wander for miles, with nothing to impede your progress but an occasional low mud wall, or bank and ditch, which your horse takes in his stride, or a thorny "nullah," up and down whose steep sides you scramble. There is something fascinating in the sense of space and liberty, the feeling that you can gallop at your own sweet will across a wide plain, pulled up by no fear of trespassing, no gates nor fences nor unclosed pastures with carefully guarded sheep and cattle, no flowery cottage gardens; the wide expanse of cloudless sky above you, the golden plain with its sandy monotony stretched out in front, broken only by occasional clumps of mango trees, or tilled spaces, where the crops grow, intersected by small ditches, cut for the purposes of irrigation—free as a bird, you lay the reins on your horse's neck, and go till he or you are tired.

Or in northern India, on a real cold, nipping morning before sunrise, you gather at the accustomed trysting-place and hear the welcome sound of the hounds' voices. A scratch pack, they are, perhaps, even a "Bobbery" pack, as the name goes in India; but the old excitement is on you, the rush for a start, and the sense of triumphant exhilaration, as the hounds settle to their work, and the wretched little jackal, or better still, the wolf, takes his unchecked course over the sandy hillocks and the short grass. A twenty-minutes' run covers the horses with lather, and sets your pulses tingling. Presently the sun is high in the horizon, and its rays are beginning to make themselves felt. A few friendly good-byes, some parting words of mutual congratulation, and you turn to ride gently home, with a feeling of self-righteousness in your heart, as you greet the lazy sister, or wife, or brother, who stands in the verandah looking for your coming. A bath—that inestimable Indian luxury—a lingering toilette, and so to breakfast. And what a breakfast, with a lovely appetite to eat it. Fish, beefsteaks, cutlets,

the most savoury and delicate of curries, fruit and coffee, ought to satisfy a Sybarite. After which a cigarette on a lounge in the verandah may be indulged in. By this time the day is only just begun, and you are free to fill the remaining hours with work or the claims of society.

Most lovers of horseflesh, seizing their sun-hats from the peg, sally out into the "compound" (a kind of grass enclosure with a few mango or tamarisk trees planted in the middle, the low roofs of the stables and the native servants' dwellings forming a background to it), and talk that cheery rambling talk all true sportsmen delight in.

The horses, some in their stalls, some picketed outside under the trees, are munching large bundles of fresh green lucern (a kind of vetch, and a substitute for grass); while the ebon grooms, seated on their haunches on the ground, hold bits and bridles between their toes, and rub away at them with praiseworthy energy. On one side are the polo and harness ponies, the match pair which the lady shows you with pride; on the other, the pony unbroken and savage, just bought at a fair

while beyond are two or three "whalers," fine sixteen-hand upstanding horses, all pronounced excellent fencers and first-rate pigstickers. The grey yonder, a compact, neat-looking animal, resembling an Irish hunter, was out this morning. Like most Australian horses, he is a great buck-jumper, and going to covert his master has some trouble in keeping a steady seat, but when settled down into his gallop, no mud wall is too high, no ditch too broad, and no day too long for him. Many are the prize spears he has won on hardly-contested pig-sticking expeditions.

Then on Sunday, the day voted to sport in India, merry paper chases fill an idle hour or two just before sunset. Any old screw, country-bred pony or short-shouldered Arab may be brought out on these occasions. The hard ground resounds with a noise like the distant roll of thunder, as the line of horsemen clatter along, raising a cloud of dust behind them. Falls abound, for the pace is good, and the leader of the chase well mounted.

The sugar canes rattle crisply like peas on a drum, as you push your way quickly

through the tall grass crops, which, forced violently asunder by your horse's progress, fall together again, and leave no trace of your passage. Down a soft, sandy lane, you canter, while your horse sinks in up to his fetlocks, past a dirty little native village, swarming with black children, where women in picturesque attitudes lean and chatter by the shady well; then over a rough, stony plain, intersected by cracks and crevices in the hard gaping earth, where you must pick your way carefully, and hold your horse together lest he break his leg and your neck, for (drawback of all in India) the ground is dreadfully hard, and falls do hurt. At last the chase is over, and your wearied beast stands with legs apart and nostrils heaving, trying to get his wind. The sun has gone down in the sudden fashion peculiar to tropical climes. Gloaming there is none, but a lovely starlight, and the clear rays of the moon to guide you safely on your way home. Ruddy lights shine out from the native huts, sundry fires shed a wild lustre, the faint, sickly odour of tobacco and opium fills the air, and the weird

beating of a tom-tom is heard in the distance.

For those to whom such a wild hot scramble, or the long free gallop over the plains does not appeal, there is the pleasant ride along the mall under the flowering acacia trees, where friends meet you at every step, and your easily-cantering Arab, with flowing mane and tail, is in harmony with the picturesque Oriental scene. Everyone rides in India, for in many places it is the only means of transit. In Assam and Central India, where roads are bad, or non-existent, and the railroads are many miles away, it is absolutely necessary for the tea-planter to reach his plantations on horseback, riding long distances over rough ground; while the commissioner or civilian making his judicial rounds, or the sportsman in search of big game, rides his twelve or fourteen miles a day, camping out in the jungle at night. The lowest subaltern owns a pony or two, and rides to and from his military duties, and the pony may be seen led up and down in front of the mess house, or standing playfully flicking the flies off with his tail, while the



faithful syce, his lean brown limbs trained to exceeding fineness by the long distances he runs, squats meekly on the dusty ground, and calls his charge by all sorts of endearing names, which the animal seems perfectly to understand. Hand-rubbing, or what is vulgarly called "elbow grease," is much practised in India, and a groom attentive to his duties takes a pride in polishing a horse's coat till it is smooth and glistening as satin. Notwithstanding this personal care, however, Indian horses, especially country-breds, are not famed for the sweetness of their tempers, and generally disagreeably resent their masters' attempt to mount. This has accordingly to be done in the most agile manner. Animals may be seen kicking, biting, plunging and even flying at one another like savage dogs, with teeth exposed, lips drawn back, nostrils heaving and eyes flashing. Yet few people would exchange the wild, daring horsemanship of India with its pig-sticking and its wild game hunting, necessitating the utmost degree of nerve and determination, for the flat and unprofitable constitutional in Rotten Row, the country

ride along a road, or even the delights of fox-hunting in England.

Riding men, who love the sport for its own value, are usually sunny-tempered, kindly at heart, and generously disposed. Women, who ride, are easy to please and unaffected ; in fact, what many men describe as “a good sort.” In conclusion, my advice to girls is, to take a riding man for a husband, and to follow themselves as far as possible all out-door pursuits and amusements. Their moral qualities will not suffer from it, while their physique will gain considerably, for bright eyes, a clear complexion, and a slim figure are beauties never to be despised.

VIOLET GREVILLE.





HUNTING IN THE SHIRES.



## HUNTING IN THE SHIRES.

“THERE are emotions deeply seated in the joy of exercise, when the body is brought into play, and masses move in concert, of which the subject is but half conscious.

“Music and dance, and the delirium of battle or *the chase* acts thus upon spontaneous natures.

“The mystery of rhythm and associated energy and blood-tingling in sympathy is here. It lies at the root of man’s most tyrannous instinctive impulses.”

Considering that J. Addington Symonds was a permanent invalid, exiled to Davos by his health, he shows in this paragraph extraordinary understanding.

Fox-hunting is not merely an idle amusement; it is an outlet for man’s natural instincts; a healthy way of making him active, and training his character. Whether it exer-

cises his mental faculties in a like degree is another question. I do not think a man can be very stupid who rides well to hounds. The qualifying remark that "he is so perfectly mounted" rather adds to his credit than otherwise, for, with unlimited means, and the best possible intention it is difficult in these days of competition to get together a stud of hunters of the right stamp.

People vary considerably in their notions of the right stamp; but most men and women who know anything about horses look out for quality, good bone, loose elbows, active shoulders, strong back, clean hocks, and a head put on the right way; whether in a horse over sixteen hands or a pony. A judge of horse flesh will never be mistaken about these qualifications, either in the meanest-looking cab horse or a rough brute in a farmyard.

Hunting people of long experience will tell us they have had one horse in their lives. One that suited their temperament, that they took greater liberties with, that gave them fewer falls, and showed them more sport

than all the others. Whyte Melville says, "Forty minutes over an enclosed country establishes the partnership of man and beast in relation of confidence." The combination of pluck, decision and persuasion in a man, and nervous susceptibility in a horse, begets intimacy and mutual affection which many married couples might envy. One horse may make a man's reputation, and pleasantly raise the average of an unequal, even shady, lot in his sale at Tattersall's.

I had a brown horse that did a great deal for me. He was nearly thorough-bred; by Lydon, dam by Pollard, 15·3, with beautiful limbs and freedom. He had poor ribs, rather a fractious mouth, and the courage of an army. I hunted him for six seasons; in Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire, and he never gave me a fall.

I once fell off him. After an enormous jump over an average fence, prompted by a feeling of power and capacity, he gave a sort of skip on landing, and on this provoca-

tion I "cut a voluntary," to use a sporting phrase. He died of lockjaw, to my unceasing regret. I remember in 1885 being mounted on an extraordinary hunter. I had not gone ten strides before I knew I could not hold him. My patron, on receiving this information, said, "What does it matter! hounds are running—you surely don't want to stop?" "Oh, no!" I replied, "but I cannot guide him." "That doesn't matter—they are running straight," so, stimulated by this obvious common sense, I went on in the delirium of the chase, till I had jumped so close to an innocent man that my habit skirt carried off his spur, and, in avoiding a collision at a ford, I jumped the widest brook I have ever seen jumped; and after that I got a pull at him. He could not put a foot wrong, and was perfectly unconscious of my wish to influence him.

I began hunting with the inestimable advantage of possessing no horses of my own. For four years I rode hired horses, and had many uncouth falls, but I never hurt myself or my horse. There is free-

masonry among "hirelings," I think: they know how to protect themselves and their riders. They jump without being bold; they are stale without being tired; and they live to be very old; by which, I presume, they are treated better than one would suppose. The first horse I ever possessed of my own cost £100, and was called Pickwell, after a manor house in Leicestershire. He was 15·2, with a swivel neck. For the benefit of people who do not understand this expression, I will say he could almost put his head upon my lap. He was a very poor "doer," and, towards the end of the season, assumed the proportions of a tea-leaf, and had to be sold. He could not do a whole day even when only hunted three days a fortnight. He was an airy performer, and I was sorry to part with him. I hunted him with the Grafton, the Bicester, and Selby Lownides. Parts of the Grafton country are as fine as Leicestershire, without having quite its scope or freedom. It is a very sporting country, with fine woodlands and good wild foxes. When I hunted there we had, in Frank Beers,



as good a huntsman as you could wish to see.

In a paper of this length any criticism of the various merits of hunting countries would be impossible. In a rough way this is how I should appraise them. The Cottesmore for hounds. The Burton for foxes. The Holder-nesse for horses. The Pytchley for riders, and the Quorn for the field.

This needs some explanation.

The Cottesmore is the most beautiful hound country in England. It is wild and undisturbed: all grass, and carrying a good scent. No huntsman can interfere with his hounds, and no field over-ride them, for the simple reason that they cannot reach them easily. The drawbacks of this from a horseman's point of view are as obvious as the advantages to a houndman's. The country is very hilly in parts, and a good deal divided by unjumpable "bottoms," which the experienced do not meddle with, and which are only worth risking if you get away on good terms with the pack, "while they stream across the first field with a dash that brings

the mettle to your heart and the blood to your brain," and your instinct tells you that you are in for a good thing! You gain nothing by chancing one of these bottoms in an average hunting run. The scientific subscriber who knows every inch of the country will be in front of you, and you are fortunate if you get your horse out before dark. Brookesby thus describes the Cottesmore :—"A wide-spread region, scarcely inhabited; ground that carries a scent in all weathers; woodlands which breed a travelling race; and mile upon mile of untracked grass, where a fox will meet nothing more terrifying than a bullock."

If hounds really race over the hilly part of the Cottesmore, no horse or rider can follow them straight. He must use his head and eyes, not merely test his pluck and quickness.

He need never lose sight of the pack if he is clever, and he will see a vision of grass landscape stretching away below him, and all around him, that will not fade with the magic of the moment.

There are people who predict the abolition of fox-hunting in England. These think themselves the penetrating observers of life; they are really the ignorant spectators, who take more trouble to avoid barbed wire than to prevent it being put up; people who join in the groan of the times, without energy or insight. Prophecies of this kind should have no value, unless it be to make hunting people more consciously careful. Since there are larger subscriptions than ever, and more people hunt, we can only trust that compensation will be given liberally, but not lavishly, and upon principles of good sense and justice. I have thus digressed merely to say that if such a day should arrive, hunting is likely to survive longer in the Cottesmore than in most countries.

The Burton (Lincolnshire) presents a striking contrast to the Cottesmore. It is as flat as Holland, and you must be on the back of hounds if you wish to see them work. Most of the country is ploughed, and, by a time-honoured custom which brought both credit and money to the Lincolnshire

farmers, many of the fields are double ploughed. This latter, to ride over, is only a little better than steam plough. As the price of wheat in England has fallen by 30 per cent. the farmers are ruined, and they are laying down more grass every year. The characteristic fence of the county is a wide drain set a little away from the hedge and cut very deep. The upstanding fences, although lower than those in the shires, are pretty high if you look at the depth of the ground from which you take off.

The gorse covers are splendidly thick and overgrown and take a long time to draw; a good many of the fashionable packs, I know, would hesitate to expose themselves to such rough work as drawing Toff Newton or Torrington gorse. The foxes are more like Scotch foxes, large and grey. They are wild, and take some killing, sometimes running for two hours. There are not enough inhabitants to head them or cheer the discouraged huntsman by occasional information.

In Cheshire I saw five foxes killed on one

day, but a huntsman in Lincolnshire will be lucky if he kills two in a week.

I hunted two winters with the Burton hounds, and I am sure the largest field I ever saw was twenty people. The master, huntsman and two whips included. Hunting in a big country with a small field and wild foxes is the best way of learning to be independent. If, as was my experience, you have a hard-riding huntsman, who gets down early in the run; one whip who takes the wrong turn out of cover, and the other who hangs back after a refractory couple of hounds, a few poorly-mounted farmers and unlucky gentlemen, you can realise with moderate difficulty the possibility of the proud position of being alone with hounds; although this distinction may be capable of the same explanation as was the position of the Scotch boy who, when boasting of being second in his class, was compelled to admit that it consisted of "Me and a lassie."

I said the Holderness for horses, and I certainly never saw a better mounted field or a finer lot of riding farmers—all of them

sportsmen and gentlemen. They ask long prices for their young horses, if they will sell them to you at all, but the chances are they have already promised them to some London dealer. Yorkshire horses are, perhaps, after Irish, the most famous. They are mostly thorough-bred, and can gallop and stay. I shall never forget a horse I held for a young farmer which would not allow him to mount. I can see it now. A long, loose-limbed bay, with a small, keen, bony face, and an eye that looked through you. I have a great weakness for a horse's face, and think in a general way it shows as much character as a man's. His back was perhaps a trifle too long, but his girth was deep, and he moved like an athlete. He was as wild as a hawk, and could hardly keep still for love of life, dancing at every shadow, and springing feet into the air when anyone passed too near him. He was beautifully ridden and humoured and ultimately settled into the discouraging trot known as "hounds pace." I asked his owner what he wanted for him, and how old he was. The man said that he was rising

six, that he wanted £300, and had often refused £250. We had a long talk, as we trotted down the road to draw the next cover, about horses in general and his bay in particular. I fancy his feats lost nothing by being repeated, but I shall not relate them, as what they gained by tradition they would lose by print.

The Holderness is a light plough country, and, like Lincolnshire, its common fence is a deep drain, into which your horse can absolutely disappear. I saw eight men down in one, all at the same time, and a young thorough-bred horse in a deep drain is about the worst company in the world.

There is not a finer country to ride over in England than the Pytchley. Unfortunately, too many people agree with us, which is a slight objection to hunting there.

They have wonderful sport, a first-rate huntsman and a rich community. Lord Spencer is the keenest of masters and best of sportsmen. Whyte Melville says of him in his riding recollections: "The present Lord Spencer, of whom it is enough to say



he hunts one pack of his own in Northamptonshire, and is always in the same field with them, never seems to have a horse pull, or, until it is tired, even lean on his hand." I should like to have been praised by Whyte Melville. He is one of the few novelists whose heroes are gentlemen, who can describe English society and a straight forty minutes over countries that we recognise.

The Pytchley is not cut up by railroads, like the Quorn. There is not nearly so much timber as there is in Leicestershire, but it is as big if not bigger.

In old days, Lord Spencer told me, they said, "You may, perhaps, go through the Pytchley, but you must get over the Quorn."

If anything will teach one to gallop, it is riding for a bridge gate in the company of three or four hundred people, none of them morbidly civil.

You must get there, and get there soon, as it is the only visible means of securing a start, or getting into the next field. Sometimes one's horse has a sensitive habit of backing when he is pressed, which allows



everyone to pass you. In any case, you will have a horse's head under each arm; a spur against your instep; a kicker with a red tape in his tail pressed towards your favourite mare, with the doubtful consolation of being told, when the iron of his hoof has rattled against her fore-leg that "it was too near to have hurt her." Your hat will be knocked off by an enthusiast pointing to the line the fox is taking, and your eye will dimly perceive the pack swaying over the ridge and furrow, like swallows crossing the sea, two fields ahead of you. If you harden your heart and jump the generally gigantic fence at the side of the gate, you expose yourself to the ridicule of the whole field; for it is on these occasions that your favourite is pretty sure to fall on her head.

No one is responsible for the manners of a field which is largely made up of "specials" from Rugby, Leamington and Banbury. A Northamptonshire hunting-man is as nice a fellow as there is in England, and outside his own country has the finest manners; but the struggle for existence in the

field with hard-riding casuals has hardened his heart and embittered his speech.

Every field has its own character; an indescribable "something" which one feels without being able to define. There is a friendliness and distinction about the Melton field peculiarly its own. The Quorn Fridays are joined by Mr Fernie's field, the Cottesmore, Belvoir and others, and is in consequence very large. Tom Firr, the huntsman—and a man who can very nearly catch a fox himself—is less moved by a large crowd than anyone I ever saw, unless, perhaps, it be his hounds who "come up through a crowd of horses, and stick to the line of their fox, or fling gallantly forward to recover it, without a thought of personal danger, or the slightest misgiving that not one man in ten is master of the two pair of hoofs beneath him, carrying death in every shoe."

A friend of mine—a cricketer—said that he did not know which country he preferred hunting in—Leicestershire or Northamptonshire—but there was the same differ-

ence between them as playing at Lords and playing at the Oval.

Melton Mowbray is about three hours and a half from London. By leaving London at 7.30 you can hunt with the Pytchley at an eleven o'clock meet. You must get up earlier to hunt with the Quorn. I doubt if many people would risk leaving London between five and six in a climate like ours, where you cannot be quite sure that between five and eleven heavy snow may not have fallen, or that the damp in one county is not hard black frost in the next.

Some say that Melton is not what it was. Perhaps this is because there are no poets left to sing of it. Bromley Davenport, Whyte Melville and others have left us. Perhaps the red town has spread, and the old fox-hunters who grumble have grown older. Of course the old days were better when they found themselves leading "The cream of the cream in the shire of the shires." These days do not come twice. A man is fortunate to have had them once, and be able to say with the poet and philosopher,—

Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,  
The joys I have possessed in spite of fate are mine.  
Not Heaven itself upon the Past has power.  
What has been *has* been, and I have had my hour.

It is no small consideration to a Meltonian that he can hunt six days a week, and never leave his house at an undue hour.

The Duke of Beaufort told me that the three best huntsmen living were Tom Firr, old Mr Watson (of the Carlow hounds), and Lord Worcester, and he is pretty sure to be right on any sporting matter. Whatever people may think of the last two named, Tom Firr's reputation is as firmly established as was Fred Archer's in another line.

From criticising the countries, I should like to pass on to the riders, both men and women, that I have seen and admired ; but, not being a journalist, I could not commit this indiscretion. I shall content myself, and perhaps not offend anyone, by writing a few general observations on women's riding.

No woman can claim to be first-rate over a country, unless she can take her own line. Most women have pluck, and would follow

their pioneer were he to attempt jumping an arm of the sea; but place them alone in an awkward enclosure, they will not know how to get out of it. They need not of necessity take a new place in every fence, but if a gap is away from the line they imagine to be the right one, it is irritating to see them pull out to follow one particular person. They don't diminish the danger by surrendering their intelligence, if they are well mounted and conscious of what they are doing. A good rider chances nothing, but must of necessity risk a good deal.

I do not think women are good judges of pace, and although they are seldom afraid of jumping, they hardly ever gallop. Men will say it is because they sit on one side and have not the power to make a horse gallop. This is obviously true in the case of many horses, but there are some who, roused by the nervous force in their riders, will gallop without being squeezed, and who want nothing more than to be held together and left alone.

There is a great deal of nonsense talked

about "lifting" and "recovering" a horse. More horses have recovered themselves by being left alone in moments of difficulty than by all the theories ever propounded. When a horse pecks with a man he is thrown forward; a woman, if she is sitting properly and not hanging her toe in a short stirrup, is, if anything, thrown back, and, from the security of her seat, is able to recover her horse with more natural advantage than a man. A woman's seat is strong, but never balanced; a horse refusing suddenly to the left may upset her balance without moving her in her seat. When a horse bucks, from the very fact that to keep on, she must sit tight, it is so tiring that the chances are she will be bucked off sooner than a man. If she gets the least out of her saddle she cannot, by reason of the pommels, get back, whereas a horse may play cup and ball with a man for a long time without missing him.

There are two classes of hunters that a woman should not be mounted on; the two that Whyte Melville says want coercion.

“The one that must be steered, and the other smuggled over a country.” A nervous, fractious brute will go as well, if not better, with a woman than with a man on him.

It is, I suppose, a want of independence in the feminine character that makes most women follow some particular man. They are nearly always beautifully mounted, and have keen enough observation to measure the height of a fence, and see the weak place. You will hear a man say to his wife,—“I must give Favourite a turn, dear, she is getting sticky,” and he will take his wife’s mare, an accomplished hunter, wise as a chaperon, and ride her with a cutting whip. It is probably the result of always following another horse, which has taken the spirit of emulation out of the mare, robbing her of a sense of responsibility and a chance of being among the first few in a fine run.

A man seldom rides as hard if he is followed by a lady. He loses his dash.

At one time no woman could fall without a certainty of being dragged by her habit skirt. or her stirrup; but now, at anyrate, that



danger has been removed, by Scott's\* apron skirt, and Mayhew's\* patent side saddle.

I saw a narrow escape once, some years ago. A young lady of indifferent nerve, mounted by a male relative on an uncongenial horse, trotted slowly down hill to a high fence to see what was on the other side. The horse, supposing he was meant to jump the fence, not unnaturally proceeded to do so, much against the lady's will. Her weak resistance succeeded in landing him on his head, in a deep ditch on the other side. She fell off, and was hung up by her habit skirt. The horse recovered himself, and, feeling a heavy weight on one side of him, was seized with a panic of fear, and, laying back his ears, thundered along in the ditch which had a gravelly bottom. A gentleman, unconscious of what had happened, rode down to the fence from the other side, and canoned upon landing against the loose horse and prostrate lady; they all rolled over together. As the lady's head had apparently been bumping the

\* Scott in South Molton Street; and Mayhew in Seymour Street, Edgeware Road.



grass bank for some twenty yards, we supposed she was killed; but, on extrication, she was discovered to be unhurt. The man had broken his collar-bone. Her habit was of the old-fashioned kind, and did not give way.

Everyone has seen similar casualties, and men, as well as women, dragged on their heads; it is the most alarming part of hunting.

I am told that there is a great art in falling, and certainly it requires judgment to know when to hold on and when to let go of the reins. There can be nothing more exasperating to a man than to loose his horse in a trifling accident, when he has a first-rate place at the beginning of a run. A friend of mine looking over a dealer's yard stopped before a flea-bitten mare. He said he would like to see her run out, as she looked like suiting him. The dealer replied,—“I could not honestly recommend her to you, sir, she would run away with you.” “But,” said my friend, “she is the very animal I want! The last one I had ran away without me.”

Loose horses are trials that go far to prov-

ing your character ; you may make a friend for life by catching his horse. There are, of course, occasions when it would be mere waste of time attempting anything of the sort, when a stupid animal careers wildly away in the opposite direction of hounds ; but I am often struck by the way self-centred people let the easiest opportunities pass of serving their neighbours. I have been delighted by seeing men, purposely looking the other way, punished by the confiding animal going straight up to them, making it impossible, with the best show of clumsiness, to avoid bringing him back to his grateful owner, who perspiring, runs across the ridge and furrow, in breeches and boots of the most approved fashion.

There is one other and last side of fox-hunting with which I will conclude.

R. L. Stevenson says, "Drama is the poetry of conduct, and Romance the poetry of circumstances." There is only one sport that combines drama and romance ; the sport for kings. There are days when your very soul would seem to penetrate the grass, when, with

the smell of damp earth in your nostrils, and the rhythm of blood-stirring stride underneath you, you forget everything, yourself included. These days live with you. They console you for the monotony of Swiss scenery. They translate you out of fierce Indian sunshine; they rise up between you and the gaslight, and shut out the grey grinding streets. You wake up to ask the housemaid half unconsciously whether it is freezing; the answer leaves you uncertain, and you jump out of bed. There is a damp fog on the window, which you hastily wipe away, to see the paths are brown, and the slates wet; there is no sun and no wind. You hear the tramp of the stable boy's feet below your room, and snatches of a song whistled in the yard, you can see the clothes line hung with stable breeches, and a very old dog poking about the court. You tie your tie, left over right, with the precision of habit, and, seizing your letters, run down to breakfast. You are independent of your host; he has a hack. You ask your hostess what she is going to do with herself, while she walks across the yard to see

you start in the buggy. You let the boy drive while you read your letters. You thrust them into your pocket and bow faintly over a high coat collar as you swing past the different riders and second horsemen. You see your horses at a corner of the road, and are told you cannot ride Molly Bawn, as she "'it 'erself" in the night—an unsatisfactory way horses valuable have of incapacitating themselves. You get on your horse and ride through a line of bridle gates till you find yourself in a bewildering throng of people and horses, just outside the village. Ladies leaning over their splash boards, talking to fine young gentlemen, unconscious of their shaft, which is tickling a horse of great value, the groom leading it, too anxious about his own mount to observe the danger. Children backing into bystanders, with their habits in festoons over the crupper; ladies standing up in their carriages divesting themselves of their wraps, and husbands unfastening their hat boxes; dealers discreetly and conspicuously taking their horses out of the crowd and cantering them round the field to show their

slow paces, looking down at the ground and sitting motionless, as if unconseious of any on-lookers. Hard, weather-beaten men in low crowned hats, with double snaffles in their horses' mouths, are feeling their girths, and ladies in long loose coats explaining to their pilots that they wear their strap on their heels, not on their toes. Your host comes up now, and you wonder, to look at his hack, that he ever arrived at all. You ask as delicately as you can what he is riding. "Old S——n," he replies, and you find yourself criticising the winner of a former Grand National. In all this fret and fuss Tom Firr sits like a philosopher, surrounded by the questioning pack; vouchsafing an occasional remark to a farmer or a patron of the hunt. At last the vast field is set in motion, and, with an eye on Firr, you jog down the road to draw. Instead of following the knowing ones, and standing outside the covert at an advantageous point down wind, you go inside and watch the hounds dancing through the little copse, sbaking the dewdrops on the undergrowth, and scattering with indifference the startled

rabbit. In perfect stillness you thread your way slowly through the tangled tracks, your horse arching his neck and pointing his toes as if he were stepping to the drum and fife. There is a spring in the grass path, and a thrill in the air which makes you lift your face to the open sky as if to receive the essence of the day, and a blessing from the unseen sun. Suddenly, without warning, a silver halloo rings through the air, driving the blood to your heart, and you find yourself wheeling your horse round and crashing through the undergrowth to a gap you had noticed as you came along. The whole field is thundering round the cover as you jump out of it with the last hound, and the pack makes hard for a fence of impassable thickness. Luckily for you they turn up it, and a lagging hound joins his friends half way up the fence, where the growers are thinner. The gate is locked, but the rail at the side is jumpable, and your horse takes off accurately and lands you in the same field as hounds. You find yourself with Firr and five or six others, who have galloped twice your distance,

to catch them. You avoid a boggy gap, which the two riders ahead of you are making for, and catch hold of your horse for a clean "stake-and-bound." It is down hill, and you feel as if you never would land. You jump into a road, and nearly fall off as your horse turns suddenly down it, following the other horses. The hounds cross, and you are carried down the road past the few places where you could jump out, and the people behind profit by their position and get over where hounds crossed. You hammer along the road with twenty people shouting "Go on!" whenever you want to stop, till an open gate takes you into the field, where you see five or six men a good way ahead of you. Nothing but pace serves you then, and all the warnings in the world that there is wire, or a brook, will not turn you from your intention to catch them again.

By luck, which you hardly deserve, the wire is loose upon the ground, and you only twing-twang it with one shoe as you land, and are off again before it curls like a shaving round your horse's leg.



You have put wire between you and the field, and are now free to go as you please for the next twenty minutes. Firr and five others are your only rivals, and they are ready to whistle a warning where the country gets complicated.

The pack check for a moment outside a small cover, but the fox is too tired and too hard pressed to go into it, and Firr gets their heads down with a sound, quite impossible to spell, and five minutes after, the hounds are tumbling over each other like a scramble at a school-feast, and Firr holds up the fox with an expression in his face as if he could eat him.

. . . . .  
You tuck the rug round you, with your mouth full of buttered toast. Your lamps are lit, and the sky is aglow.

“Let 'em go please. *Come!*” and with a bound and a clatter you leave the sun behind you, and, shaving the gate-post, swing down the turnpike home.





HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS.



## HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS.

BY THE DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

WHY are ladies sometimes considered nuisances out hunting? Because the generality of riders are unfortunately in the way of their neighbours, and have not the remotest idea of what they ought to do.

Before they inflict themselves on the hunting field, they should learn to manage their horses, to keep out of the way, and should they wish to jump, to ride straight at their fences, not landing too near their pilots, and not taking anyone else's place. When once they can accomplish so much, they will no longer be considered troublesome. In fact, few things are more dangerous than riding in Rotten Row, simply because the greater part of the riders have not the faintest idea of the risks they incur. You will see both young men and young women galloping recklessly

along with a perfectly loose rein, sometimes knocking down the unfortunate ones who happen to be in their way, and followed by grooms who have usually even less idea of riding and finish the mischief their owners have begun.

Then the untidy, slipshod way the riders are often turned out is a disgrace to a country which is considered to have the best horses and riders in the world. What must foreigners—Hungarians, for instance, who know something of riding, of horses, and of horsemen—think of the doubtful spectacle two-thirds of the riders present. Poor old screws, who have usually to pull the family coach of an afternoon, broken-down hunters, an apology for hacks, are to be seen carrying their fair burdens, who look anything but at home in their saddles, with hair piled up in latest but most unworkmanlike fashion, flapping blouses, and habits that look as though night-gowns, still worn, were beneath. Of course many people cannot afford expensive hacks, but I would sooner any day have a broken-

winded or broken-kneed screw that was well-bred and well-shaped, than a sound one who looked an underbred, lazy, three-cornered beast. Besides, there is no reason why any one who can afford a horse at all, should not have it well groomed, with neat saddle, and brightly-burnished bit, and be at the same time smartly turned out herself. It is as cheap to be clean as to be dirty; and a little extra trouble will go a long way in the desired direction.

For the safety of the multitude, it would be a good thing if all people who are going to ride or drive on the public highway were made to pass an examination as to their capabilities, and I do not believe, if that were so, that half of the present riders in the road would be admitted.

Children are taught to ride quite on the wrong principle. How can a child of three understand or appreciate a ride in a pannier on some fat Shetland's back? The age of eight years is quite soon enough for any child to begin; before that time it is impossible for them to control the smallest

pony, and this very experience often destroys their nerve.

In buying a pony, be very sure that it is sound, with a nice light mouth; twelve hands is quite small enough. Most children's hands are spoilt by letting them learn to ride on a pony destitute of any mouth, the result is they learn to hold on by the poor thing's bridle, and anyone who does that can never ride well. Let girls first learn to stick on a cross saddle before putting them on a side saddle, it teaches them to sit straight, and is much better for them in every way.

Anyone with bad hands can never be a really good rider. You can go hard, be able to ride a horse that has bad manners, such as kicking, bucking, rearing, running away, for that is simply a matter of nerve; but a good rider means someone whose horse always goes nicely and kindly, who does not hang on his mouth, who knows how to make him gallop, and can ride really well at a fence. Half the falls out hunting come from putting your horse crookedly at the

fence, and from losing your head when he has made a mistake.

Always endeavour—should your horse come down with you, and you have not parted company—to keep your presence of mind. Do not try to get off, as that will probably lead to a worse accident. Leave the reins alone, for nothing frightens a horse more when he is down than touching his mouth with the bit. Sit quite still, and it is more than likely that you will be able to continue your ride without the smallest mishap, or even a dirty back.

A great deal has been said on the subject of ladies' horses. One thing is quite certain—they cannot be too good, and for a side-saddle a fine shoulder is indispensable ; for, if you ride a horse without it, the sensation is most unpleasant. You feel as though you were sitting on his ears. Before mounting, always see that the saddle is not put on the top of the withers, but just behind them, so that the weight does not fall on the top of the shoulders. Besides being less likely to give a sore back, the rider is much more comfortable. The reason why ladies give a sore back so



often is that they ride with too long a stirrup, and do not sit straight. Sit well to the off side, and, should you think your saddle is not quite straight, either get someone to alter it for you or go home, for anything is better than to have your horse laid up for a month with a bad back. I think a well-bred horse about 15·2, with a nice light mouth, is the nicest mount for a woman. For if one gets a really good fencer and galloper this size, he is far better than a big underbred horse that tires one out immediately. But, of course, everyone has to be mounted according to her weight. A nice light weight can see a great deal of sport on the back of a really good pony about fourteen hands. It is wonderful the big fences many such ponies will contrive to get over, if they really mean business. The first pony I ever had was a little twelve-hand Welsh mare, and there was nothing that pony wouldn't jump or scramble over somehow. What was too high for her she would get under. She could crawl and climb like a cat, and gallop faster than most horses; and, when she was twenty years of age, was as fresh as

a three-year-old. In fact, my brother won three races of five furlongs on the flat with her, against much bigger ponies. The best thing I can wish any of our readers is to have another, whether horse or pony, as good and as game as she was.

K. NEWCASTLE.



THE WIFE OF THE M. F. H.



## THE WIFE OF THE M. F. H.

BY MRS CHAWORTH MUSTERS.

IF there is one calling in which a real help-mate can be of more use to a man than any other, it is in that many-sided and arduous undertaking called "hunting a country."

Not that it is to be desired that a lady should take an active part in the field management, like the well-meaning dame who is reported to have said to an offender, "If I were a gentleman I would swear at you." But without letting zeal outrun discretion, how much may a "mistress of hounds" (as we will call her for brevity's sake) do to promote sport and good feeling, besides deciding on the cut of a habit, and on who is to be invited to wear the hunt colours.

"I have been a foxhunter myself, and I know how selfish they are," was the re-

mark once made to the writer by an old gentleman in Leicestershire, and it must, in candour, be admitted that there was some truth in his agreeable frankness.

Now, the mistress of the hounds should do all in her power to make hunting acceptable, by trying to counteract the overbearing egotism which no doubt is apt to be the effect of an absorbing pursuit on men's characters.

She should bear in mind that hunting was, after all, made for man, and not man for hunting, and that because some people are fortunate enough to be born with a taste for that amusement, combined (which is important) with the means of gratifying it, there is no reason why others less happily gifted should be despised and sent to the wall.

The cause of fox-hunting was never yet furthered by votaries, who appear to think everything else in the way of sport unworthy of thought or notice. "Give and take," should be their motto, as well as that of all conditions of men, in fact, "more so" considering that, in the present day, most

followers of hounds are indebted to others for their fun, and do not own a yard of the land they ride over.

Many a man is "put wrong" for life, and hastily designated as a "beastly vulpecide," who would have been pleased to find a fox for his neighbours now and then, though not caring for the sport himself, if he had been treated with the consideration generally shown in other matters. Therefore, the lady we have in our mind will do all she can to sympathise with the pursuits and amusements of others besides hunting people, and will do her best to destroy the idea that a fine horsewoman must necessarily be "horsey," or a lover of fox-hounds "doggy."

Since the extraordinary popularity of Whyte Melville's and Surtee's novels and songs, a generation has grown up, who have flattered themselves into the belief that the fact of riding after hounds at once makes heroes and heroines of them, and that they are almost conferring a benefit on their fellow-creatures by emulating Kate Coventry or the Honourable Crasher.



Formerly people went hunting because they liked it, now with many it is a means to an end, a passport to good society, a fashion rather than a taste.

In the true interests of fox-hunting this is to be deplored, but as it is impossible to separate the wheat from the chaff, a mistress must content herself with smoothing over difficulties, with trying to avoid collisions between those who *live* in a country, and those who *hunt* in it; and it will be her aim to make up for any roughness or seeming neglect on the part of those who follow her husband's hounds.

As Jorrocks told James Pigg, "There must be unanimity and concord, or we sha'n't kill no foxes."

A lady should herself set an example of courtesy when meeting at a country house by dismounting and paying her respects to the hostess, especially if the owner is not a habitual follower of the chase. She may also sometimes make an opportunity to call on her way home for a few minutes, not obviously with the desire of

snatching a few mouthfuls, like a hungry dog, and then tearing out again, but in a neighbourly, pleasant fashion, for no one likes to be unmistakably made a convenience of.

These little amenities go a long way towards what is called "keeping a country together," and, when the lady at the head of affairs sets her face against rudeness and "cliqueishness" there is likely to be less friction between those whom a Melton sportsman once designated as the "cursed locals," and the sporting gentry who are only birds of passage.

Politeness in the field is, of course, part of our ideal lady's nature, and she could no more omit to thank the sportsman, farmer, or labouring man, who showed her an act of civility, than if he were her partner at a ball; though a story is told of a gentleman in a crack country, who said to a fair follower of the chase, that she was the forty-second lady he had held a gate for, and the first who had said "Thank you."

But let us turn to the farmer, who with his farmyard gate in his hand, is anxiously

watching some young stock crowding against his valuable ewes in an adjoining field, while a light-hearted damsel is leading a select party over the wheat, so as to outstrip the riders who follow the headland, on their way to draw a favourite covert. Possibly that farmer in "a happier day than this," rode his own nag horse with the best of them, and talked cheerily to his landlord about the cubs in the big rabbit hole, and the partridge "nesses" in his mowing grass, but now neither he nor "the Squire" can afford nag horses or shooting parties. It is toil and moil, all work and no play, for the occupier; and very likely the landlord has had to let the pleasant acres on which he and his forefathers disported themselves, and feels shy of the tenants for whom he is unable to do all they have been accustomed to.

It is in these cases that "the lady" will come to the front, with all the tact and kindness that is in her. Instead of rushing rudely past him, she will pull up and listen to the poor man's remarks, and, perhaps, help

him to restrain his straying beasts. There are so many occasions in a day's hunting, when a few minutes more or less are of little importance, that it is a pity they should not be utilised in promoting good feeling and mutual understanding, instead of being wasted in grumbling at the huntsman, and abusing the sport he shows.

The mistress of the hounds can do something, surely, by precept and example, to discourage the outrageous lavishness coupled with meanness, which is the curse of modern life, and is nowhere more odious and out of character than in the hunting field.

People who spend every sixpence they can afford, and some they cannot, on their habits and boots and saddles, cannot, of course, produce one of those useful coins at an opportune moment, but if they *could* stint themselves now and then of an extra waistcoat or tie, they would find that the spare cash would go a long way towards mending a broken rail; to say nothing of the different feeling with which the advent of hounds

would be regarded, if it meant money *in* the pocket, instead of *out* of it.

Munificence in the few, but meanness in the many, is, unfortunately, too much the rule among hunting men and women. They find it apparently much easier to write tirades to the *Field* on the subject of "wire" for instance, than to produce a few shillings and quietly get it taken down, as in some instances could easily be done. A wooden rail costs sixpence, a day's work half-a-crown, and it does seem rather pitiful, that, considering the three millions more or less annually spent on hunting in the United Kingdom, it should be found impossible, except in a few well-managed districts, to provide funds for fencing.

Our mistress might well turn her attention to this matter, and she may induce other ladies to look round their own neighbourhoods, and see what can be done in this way in a friendly spirit, without the formalities of committees and subscriptions.

It is not unlikely that among the tenant farmers or freeholders of our lady's acquaint-

ance may be one, who from age or "bad times" has been obliged to retire to a smaller sphere, but whose heart is still true to fox-hunting, and who would delight in being of use, if he only knew how. Such a man, mounted on an old pony, could be of the greatest service in a hunting country. He would follow in the track of the horsemen, shutting the gates they have invariably left open, and would have an eye on the perverse young horses and wandering sheep which do not "love the fold," but prefer to *rush* madly, like their betters, after the fascinations of a pack of hounds.

There may be instances in which the mistress of the hounds herself is content to "take a back seat" and to humbly watch her husband's prowess without emulating it, and in such a case she can do a good deal in the way of shutting gates, calling attention to stray stock, and noting damage done to fences and crops.

It is quite impossible for a master to see half the delinquencies committed by his field, though he is, of course, held responsible for

them, but if the rearguard of the merry chase, so to say, was brought up by an official, whose business it was to detect the offenders who get off and "jump on top" of fences, it would be a cheaper and more satisfactory arrangement in the long run.

In a wet season it should be borne in mind that it hurts *all* crops to be ridden over, grass as well as arable, and therefore roads and headlands should be strictly adhered to when going from covert to covert. Any considerable damage should be apologised for, if possible at once, and if people were not so desperately afraid of paying for their amusement (because that amusement is called hunting), an acknowledgement given there and then to the sufferer would do him no harm, and the cause of fox-hunting a great deal of good. A season or two ago, a whole field of ardent (?) sportsmen in a crack country allowed themselves to be delayed for a long time bandying words at an occupation bridge, with a man who had "turned awkward," and who was completely in his rights within stopping the way if he chose.



It seems curious that among a hundred horsemen, worth among them, probably, as many thousands a year, no one seems to have been struck with the idea of producing a sovereign to pay for the cutting up of the grass that must follow the passage of such a squadron.

But perhaps we have dwelt too long on the seamy side of the duties of a mistress of hounds. Let us turn to the more agreeable contemplation of her pleasures.

Should she belong to a hunting family, she will have heard from her father, ever since she can remember, stories of the "brave days of old," of Meynell, and Musters, and the giants of those days. She will have learnt to sing "Osbaldeston's voice, reaching the heavens, boys," to repeat the "Billesdon Coplow" and "Ranksborough Gorse," and in the intervals of schoolroom lessons she will have been taken to see packs now, perhaps, become historical.

If a dweller in the North Country, the name of Ralph Lambton will be familiar



to her; and in the South, legends of John Ward and Mr Farquharson of Badminton, and Berkeley, have been the delight of her youth.

Should she be fortunate enough to live in "the Shires" she may, from an early age, have looked up at the towers of Belvoir, where hunting and hospitality are a byword and a delight, and she may just remember the glories of Quorn, and Sir Richard, of Lord Henry, and the Burton, like Mr Bromley Davenport,

"Nourishing a verdant youth,  
With the fairy tales of gallops, ancient runs  
devoid of truth."

The kind cheery voices of Captain Percy Williams and Mr Anstruther Thomson, always indulgent and encouraging to young people, may have fostered her natural love of the chase, and she may, while hunting with the former, have imbibed some idea of riding, from the sight of the celebrated Dick Christian handling the young horses at Rufford.

She will have looked with a reverential awe at blind Mr Foljambe of Osberton, who was able to judge of any hound by the sense of touch, long after that of sight was denied him, and who still hunted led by a groom.

Perhaps a little private hunting with beagles, or foxhound puppies, may have given our future mistress an interest in individual hounds, their treatment and characteristics, so that by-and-by, when she has to do with things on a larger scale, it is easier for her to know one hound from another, and to appreciate their differences, than if she had never seen less than seventeen or eighteen couple together.

Very likely it may have been her dream from childhood to marry a Master of Hounds, so when, as the old song says,—

“A young Country Squire requested her hand,  
Whose joy ’twas to ride by her side,  
So domestic a prospect what girl could withstand,  
She became, truly willing, his bride.”

Then would follow the interest of making

acquaintance with the country, with all classes of people in it, with the coverts, lanes, and bridle-paths, the lovely little bits that most people never see at all, to say nothing of the pleasant companionship of hounds, horses, and hunt-servants.

Captain Percy Williams's advice to a young M. F. H. was, "Stay at home with your wife and your hounds," but how can a man do so, if his wife is all agog to drag him to London or abroad directly the hunting season is over? Hounds should be a summer as well as a winter pastime, but whether they are so or not depends almost entirely on the wife of their possessor.

When all is said and done, two people, who are young, happy, and like-minded, can scarcely find an enjoyment greater than that of going out hunting together with their own hounds. To be starting on a nice horse, on a fine morning, for one long day of happiness, is a delight that can only be enhanced by sharing it with a kindred soul, and best of all if that soul is a husband's.

Then the greetings from all classes at the meet, the feeling of giving pleasure to so many, the pride in the hounds, and the skill of the huntsman, tempered though it be with anxiety for the success of the day's sport, all go to warm the heart and fire the imagination as nothing else does.

And as the hours pass imperceptibly, and the brown woods open their vistas, and yellowing pastures alternate with dark hedges, and the chiming of hounds with the distant holloas, there is the anticipation of an

“Oak Room with a blazing fire  
To end a long day's ride,  
And what to them is chance and change  
While they sit side by side.”

Years afterwards, when many other things have turned to bitterness or disappointment, comrades of the hunting field will be a solace and a pleasure to each other, and the mistress of the hounds, when no longer following their cry, will be with them in spirit, will be interested to the points of each run, the perform-

ance of each pack, and her heart will ever  
beat true to

“The friends for whom, alive or dead, her love is  
unimpaired ;

The mirth, and the adventure, and the sport that  
they have shared.”

LINA CHAWORTH MUSTERS.

FOX-HUNTING.



## FOX-HUNTING

“The sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt, and only five-and-twenty per cent of its danger.”

THERE are many ladies very well qualified to write a valuable paper on the art of riding over a country, but, possibly, the following short sketch—from the *hunting* more than the riding point of view—may be of interest, as I am sorely afraid ladies are sometimes apt to forget the presence of the *hounds*, and little consider the trouble and anxiety it takes to bring into the field a really efficient pack.

Some masters may have the good fortune to start with a ready-made and perfect pack of hounds—a most perishable possession—as a very short time of unintelligent management will reduce the finest pack in the kingdom to a comparatively worthless one



—but the majority have to begin from the bottom for themselves.

Fortunately, draft hounds are plentiful, and a hundred couple or more can easily be bought—out of which (taking care to get quit of any *good-looking* ones) forty couple sufficient for a start may be got.

Now as to horses.

Many people suppose that any sort of screw is good enough for a servant's horse. No more fatal or uneconomical error exists.

A huntsman's horse should be as near perfection as can be got; and this cannot be had for little money.

A huntsman has sufficient to do to attend to his business, without being a rough rider at the same time, and ought to feel himself to be the best mounted man in the field, or thereabouts.

If he is put on inferior animals, he has a very strong temptation to feed his hounds back to his horse. A really strong pack of hounds on a *good* scent will run away from any horse living.

And that wonderful huntsman one hears

of "who is always with his hounds," nine times out of ten always has his hounds *with him*.

All servants' horses should be well-bred, strong, and short-legged, for it must be borne in mind that they have much harder work than gentlemen's horses, therefore care should be taken that they are qualified to carry a good deal more weight than would appear necessary to the uninitiated.

Hounds and horses having been bought, we must now proceed to man the ship.

To begin with—The Master.

Let us suppose an M. F. H., who has been properly taught the trade (for it is impossible for anybody, be he never so rich, to satisfactorily perform the duties of this important position, unless he has been thoroughly grounded in the *rudiments*).

Such an one is always courteous and kindly to those with whom he is brought in contact, be they connected with the agricultural interest, or members of his field. There is a vast deal of human nature in people, and a little civility goes a long way.

An ill-mannered master is a curse to any country, and a mere "Field-Damner" is a creature unfit to live.

Few know the troubles of keeping a country, and the cordial co-operation of the master in this work is of vital importance.

Our supposititious M. F. H., however, thoroughly appreciates this obligation, and, bearing this in mind, he will select for his huntsman a respectable, well-mannered servant. Nothing farmers and keepers detest so much as an ill-conditioned, uncivil man.

The first necessity in a huntsman is, that he should be a man whom hounds are fond of, and who is fond of them. He should be in constant companionship with his hounds, taking the greatest care in keeping them off their benches as much as possible. The neglect of this somewhat troublesome duty in many kennels results in lameness.

He must be an early man in the morning, as hounds ought to be finished feeding by eight o'clock the day before hunting.

He should carefully watch the constitution of each hound, and feed it accordingly.

It is *impossible* for hounds to drive and run hard unless they are fed strong, and are full of muscle.

A thin hound is a weak hound and tires at night.

Hounds ought always to be cast in front of their huntsman, but this cannot be done unless they are really strong and vigorous.

If to these important qualifications can be added a fine horseman, so much the better; but riding is really a secondary consideration in a huntsman, provided he is workman enough to keep pretty handy with his hounds.

There is no occasion to give young gentlemen a lead over the country, let them find the way for themselves.

A good cheery voice is also a valuable property in a huntsman.

For his whipper-in, he will have a young man who has learnt his duty, as described in a little book called *Hints to Huntsmen*,\* by heart. If he knows that, and *practises*

\* *Hints to Huntsmen*, by Colonel Anstruther Thomson, published by Fifeshire Journal Office, Cupar-Fife.

it, he will have all the necessary knowledge.

A more abominable sight does not exist than the *hard-riding* whipper-in, he is, for the most part, a useless, conceited lad, who will never do any good in this world or the next.

The second whip should be a nice, quiet boy, and a good horseman.

Having got our establishment into working order, we will now take it out for a hunt, which I will try to describe from the point of view indicated in my opening paragraph.

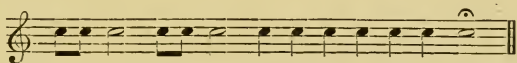
For a right good place to find a fox, give me a smallish wood. As a rule, hounds come away from a wood *settled* to their fox, which is not the case from a gorse, the first whip having been sent on to view the fox away.

The field being placed by the master (who remains with them)\* in a favourable position, our huntsman throws his hounds

\* You will recollect that our master has been *taught*, and knows that whip's work is not his duty.

into covert, encouraging them to spread and draw, being careful that they are in front of his horse. When a well-known voice proclaims the hitting of the drag, he cheers the pack to that hound, calling it by name, as "Hark to Melody! Hark to her! Hark!" But they fly to one another of themselves, and shortly there is a grand cry.

One ring round the wood, and the whipper-in's "Tally-ho, gone awa-a-a-y" is heard, he having taken good care to let the fox well away before holloa-ing. The huntsman now makes his way as fast as possible to the holloa, at the same time blowing his horn for the information of the field—



—as the hounds leave the covert, well settled to the scent.

And now, I think, you can appreciate my preference of a wood to a gorse.

Then, what a scene of excitement. Men and women in such a fuss and hurry. In

the whole lot only about three really calm and collected—the master (seeing a useful scent, and hounds with a fair start, is, for once in a way, delighted to say, “Catch them if you can!”), and an oldish man or two still able to take their part, if hounds *really* run.

Let me, like black care, sit behind one of these latter, and view the chase through his spectacles. He knows every gate and gap in the country for miles round, but this morning he sees he must desert his favourite paths if he wants to see the hounds run. All the dash of twenty years ago returns to him, as he slips his steady old hunter over a somewhat awkward corner, and (before most of the young ones take in the situation) is making the best of his way to the down-wind side of the now flying pack.\*

Well, here we are. And, first, let us take a look at the hounds. For a scratch lot, they are well together, and the careful

\* If you have a chance, always get the down-wind side of hounds running, because, even if you lose sight of them, you can still hear the cry, while, if you are up-wind, it is extraordinary what difficulty you have in hearing them.



kennel management of the summer shows itself.

Now for the horsemen, see the *hard* gentleman of tender years GALLOPING from sheer funk at fences, that one of the old school jumps out of the most collected canter. And then, oh, ye gods, the girls! brave beyond words, jamming their unfortunate horses into every sort of difficulty, with elbows squared, and the sole of their foot exposed to the astonished gaze of those behind them.

Alas! alas! the art of equitation will soon be a lost one.

Fifteen minutes racing pace takes the nonsense out of all. The fox turns sharply down-wind, and the huntsman — who has been riding carefully and quietly — knows they have overrun it. Not one word does he say, letting his hounds swing their own cast. As they do not recover the line, he is compelled to give them a bit of assistance.

With such a scent, he can go a little fast; so, at a sharp trot, he makes his cast back, his whip putting the hounds on to him. No noise nor rating, such as is



only too frequently heard. An ugly black-and-white brute hits the scent down a hedgerow. He cheers the pack to him, well knowing it was not the lack of beauty that caused the old dog to be where he is.

Now, stand back and see them hunt, with nothing to mar your pleasure in watching the wonderful instinct of a high-bred foxhound, except the chatter of the male and female thrusters, describing to each other the wonderful leaps they have severally surmounted.\*

The fox now runs the road for a quarter of a mile. Whatever you do, keep off them, and give hounds room to turn.†

The chase continues down-wind. How they swing and try. Look how they drive as they hit the scent, then spread themselves like a fan, only to fly together again

\* If you go out hunting, *hunt*. There is nothing more irritating to the real sportsman than the incessant chatter and laughter of people who take no intelligent interest in the business of hunting.

† When hounds run down a road, get your horse on the grass siding. Nothing is so apt to force hounds beyond the scent as the rattle of horses' feet behind them.

as a trusted comrade speaks to the line.

"All this comes of condition," as my old gentleman says.

Hark! a holloa forward.

Do you think a sensible man will lift them?

No; so long as they can carry on, he knows they will go quicker than he can take them.

More patient hunting, through sheep and over bad ground, the huntsman cheering his hounds, but never interfering with them, as they work out all the turns of a sinking fox for themselves.

They'll have him directly, one can see by the determined rush of the older hounds. Sure enough! In another minute they run from scent to view, and pull their fox down in the open.

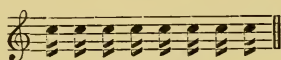
Five-and-forty minutes, and I ask you if this is not a sporting hunt.

My old friend dismounts, leading his horse away, at the same time remarking,—

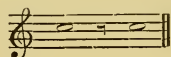
"It is a nasty sight to see ladies watching a poor fox pulled to pieces."

Although a note on the subject of blowing a hunting-horn may not be of great interest to many people, still, I venture to think, no harm can be done in placing before your readers how a huntsman ought to communicate on that instrument with his hounds and field.

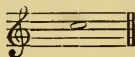
When he views a fox—



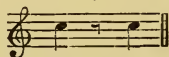
In-drawing (especially in a big wood)—



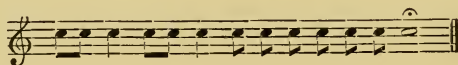
if hounds are wide of him, they stop to *listen* to the first note, and *go* to the second. To stop hounds off heel or riot—



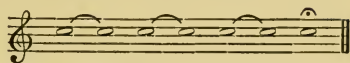
To call hounds in the open to cast—



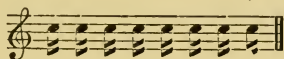
“Gone away”—



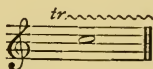
To draw hounds out of covert—



When a fox is killed—



also,



Some people only use the long rattle at the death, but my opinion is that the eight very sharp notes should be blown, as hounds know that they mean a *fox*, and a fox *only*, whether alive or dead.



TEAM AND TANDEM DRIVING.



## TEAM AND TANDEM DRIVING.

BY MISS ROSIE ANSTRUTHER THOMSON.

BEING almost a beginner myself, it is with diffidence that I commence to relate my small experiences in four-in-hand driving. It is only because I have had the advantage of watching a first-rate coachman in my father that I venture to do so—having taken care to gather from him many hints and wrinkles as to what to do, and *not* to do, and more especially the *reason* WHY.

It is, I know, supposed to be easier to drive a team than a tandem, because two horses abreast are believed to be less foolish than two single horses. Personally, I think *all* horses are astonishingly foolish at times, and, for a lady, a tandem is much less heavy.

Of course it depends in a measure on people's *hands* whether horses feel heavy and hang, but the weight of four horses on a woman's wrist is decidedly a strain, until,



through practice, she becomes accustomed to the feeling—that is, unless the team is so perfectly trained that they almost drive themselves.

In driving a team, the first thing to be learnt is the art of “catching” a four-in-hand whip. It certainly *looks* easy enough, and many a time have I watched my father, with one upward turn of his wrist, catch it unerringly every time, and felt—“Of *course* any duffer could do that!”—eagerly proclaiming my ability to do it too. This, however, is an altogether different affair. No twisting, no jerking is allowed, but simply a turn of the wrist, making something like a figure eight in the air, and leaving the thong caught on the stick (never try to catch your thong *with* the stick) with a loop above and a few turns round the stick below, which brings both lash and stick into your hand together. It is an impossible thing to describe, and the only way to learn it is to get some patient friend to show you how. And you will require all your Job-ish propensities, for it is by no means easy at first, and it makes you feel very foolish

when all your efforts fail, after it has looked so ridiculously simple in the hands of an expert. Nothing looks worse than people essaying to drive a team *without* knowing how to catch their whip, and their wild attempts to attain that end are almost pathetic, for the flourishes they make, end invariably only in a hopeless complication and tangle.

Having mastered your whip, the next thing to do is to defeat your reins—and beware that they do not defeat you, for they are very mixing, and the numbers one has to deal with make one almost giddy, after the ordinary single pair. In driving a team, or a tandem, you should not hold your reins one through each finger, as in riding, but put one rein—your near leader's—over the top of the forefinger of your left hand, and the other leader's rein—the off—and the near wheeler's reins BOTH between your first and middle fingers (the leader's upmost), while your off wheeler's rein comes lowest of all, between your middle and third finger. It looks rather complicated on paper, but is really very quickly learnt, especially if the wheeler's reins are a little

different in colour, having probably become darker through more constant wear.

Mind you take your reins *before* you get on to your box, and *never* commit the folly of getting into a carriage before your coachman, or coachwoman, has hold of the reins, for it is both dangerous and foolish.

Before you take the reins, it is well to look round all the harness and satisfy *yourself* that the curb chains and throat lashes are loose enough (grooms are so fond of pulling everything up as tight as it will go, and often seem to treat throat lashes and curb chains on the same principle as girths). See that the bits are not too short in the horses' mouths, that your leaders are properly coupled, and also your wheelers. You cannot be too particular about detail in this case, and mind the pole chains are not too tight. They should be easy, so that they can just swing—the pole carrying itself without resting any weight on the horses collars.

After you have seen that all is right, go round to the off-side wheeler and take your leader's reins from off his pad, put them in

your left hand, with forefinger between, then pick up your wheeler's in your *right* hand, with forefinger between. Now pass them on to their ultimate destination (one on each side of the third finger of your left hand), and draw the *near* reins through your fingers till you get them so short (while you are still on the ground) that they will all come even when you are sitting on your box. Nothing denotes a muff more than omitting to do this. Of course the driver must judge how much rein to take in, with his or her eye, before getting up.

As you cannot swarm on to your box hampered by the reins in your left hand, you must take them in your right until you have settled yourself comfortably, and are sitting (not standing) firmly on your seat, which should not slant up too much, for one gets more purchase if one is not merely leaning against the box. Once there, change your reins back into your left hand, take the whip out of the socket, catch it, drop your hand, and set sail.

The correct thing, I believe, is to have

the whip ready caught and laid across the wheeler's quarters. That is what they did in old coaching days, and the driver used to take it up with his reins together in his right hand, with the whip pointing towards his right shoulder. He then got up, with reins and whip all ready to start as soon as he said the word "Go!"

It would be a good thing if grooms at the horses' heads *would* let go the *instant* you give them the hint to do so. Nothing is more irritating to both horse and driver than a man who will hold on after you have started.

In starting, you should have your leaders a little shorter by the head than the wheelers, as the wheelers should start the coach. Letting the leaders start first is very likely to end in disaster. Like buckets in a well, they jump off with a jerk before the wheelers are ready. Just as they subside, off go the wheelers. The result is confusion, and possibly a broken trace.\* Take up your reins

\* One should always go out provided with an extra trace, in case of accidents.

then, to avoid this calamity, feeling all your horses' mouths, but with the leaders' accentuated; and, when you are quite ready to start, just drop your hand and chuckle to them. Never "kiss" at your horses, and never say "Pull up," — both are shocking and unpardonable.

As to the use of a four-in-hand whip, there is almost as much art in hitting the leaders as there is in throwing a fishing-fly. You should always hit your leaders under the bars, and quietly, to avoid startling the other horses. In driving anything, whether one horse or four, you should always begin by touching your horse quite gently at first, just drawing the whip across his shoulder. If this hint is not enough, repeat it a little harder and a little harder still, so that he improves his pace gradually, this obviates the uncomfortable jolts and jerks caused by bad coachmen when using their whips; they make the mistake of hitting hard the *first* time, the horse jumps forward and the passengers nearly dislocate their necks in consequence. Also, you should always hold



them a little tighter when you are going to use the whip to prevent their starting forward, for many horses will jump at the first touch, no matter how lightly it is laid across them.

In turning a corner with a team or tandem, take up your leaders' reins a little and give them the hint which turn to take *before* you get to the corner (this is technically called "pointing your leaders"). They are generally quick enough at taking your hint, and then mind you allow enough space for the hind wheels of your coach.

Always go quite slow off the top of a hill. Take up your leaders *before* you get to it. You can get safely down any hill, no matter how steep, provided you start slow enough off the top. The pace is bound to increase the further down you get, so it is wise not to start too fast, otherwise you end in an uncomfortable sort of gallop, with the coach overhauling the horses all the way. Sometimes it is a good plan to increase your pace, supposing there is a hill to be got up just in front of you; in that case, get your horses

into a gallop going *down* so as to get a run at the next hill, and the impetus will carry you up much easier if you have a real good swing at it. Of course a long hill is a different thing, especially if it is off the flat, and in every case your horses must be considered.

It is important that horses should be brought in cool, therefore one should do the last mile of the journey slowly and quietly that they may not be too hot on arriving at their stable.

It is a bad thing to keep horses waiting at the start, they are not generally gifted with much more patience than we are, and it is worse to check them once they are on the move, therefore it is best, when all the passengers are on board, that the last to get up should sing out "Right," to let the coachman know they are really ready to be off, and so prevent the risk of being implored to "wait just ONE moment" for the forgotten coat or umbrella, or the thousand and one things people always *do* forget until the very last instant, notwithstanding what is



usually the fact that they have been dawdling about hours before hand, with nothing else to do but to prepare themselves for the cold and rain which, in this climate, is about the only thing one can count on.

Once off, try to leave your reins alone as much as possible ; it is irritating to your horses' mouths, and looks bad, to be always fidgiting and pulling at either one rein or the other. Don't let your leaders do all or nearly all the work, and going down hill don't let them do any, but catch hold of them pretty short just before you get to the brow of the hill and pull them back—a tiny bit on one side to prevent the wheelers treading on their heels.

In taking up and shortening your reins, many people say you should always push them from in front with the right hand, and not draw them through the fingers from behind, though the latter way often seems the most natural, and all coachmen do not agree on this point. It looks better to drive with *one* hand, the left, and to keep the right for the whip and an occasional assist-

ance only ; but a woman must have wrists of iron to drive a team with one hand for long, especially as the wrist should always be bent in driving as well as in riding. Driving with straight wrists is altogether wrong. One thing never to be forgotten is always to make your wheelers follow your leaders, thereby you can generally assume an air of nonchalance, and pretend that you *intended* the sudden deviation off the middle of the road caused by the digression of the leaders, if your wheelers immediately follow in their footsteps. Should it be only a slight digression, a pull at the two reins between your first and second fingers *both at once*, will put them right immediately, as that gets at your off leader and near wheeler at the same time, and is a very quick way of getting the team straight again. It is better form not to use the break unless it is absolutely necessary. People bore one so who are always putting their drags on and off. I do not mean the "shoe," as that, of course, must be put on, on occasions when the hill is steep to prevent the coach running on to the horses.

I remember once driving with my father in the Fife country, where the roads resemble switchback railways more than Christian highways. We had arrived at the top of a very steep pitch, and the grooms having slipped on the shoe, we were trundling serenely down, when, just as we reached the middle of the hill where the whole impetus of the coach was at its worst, snap went the chain and away rolled the shoe off down the hill on its own account, of course the sudden release sent the coach with a great lurch on the top of the wheelers, while we all clung on, craning our necks to see what was going to happen next. Quick as thought out flew the whip thong, and in an instant my father had touched the horses all round and we were flying down the hill at racing pace. We got to the bottom all safe and had galloped to the top of the next hill before he took a pull. It was very exciting for the time, and the only thing to be done under the circumstances to keep the horses going quicker than the coach, but not an experiment one would care to try with an inferior coachman.

We have all been mercifully blessed with nerve, and many a time has our courage been severely put to the test. We had a very near shave one day some years ago coming back from Ascot. We were driving all the way home to London after the last day's racing. Our off leader was a very violent, hot horse, called "The Robber," who kept raking and snatching at his bridle from morning till night. As we were passing through a little town—Brentford—we tried to worm our way between the pavement and a baker's cart, which was proceeding slowly in front and giving us very little room to pass.

This irritated The Robber, who, making a wild bounce forward, wrenched the bridle clean off the wheeler's head! (His rein was passed through the upright terret on the top of the wheeler's bridle, and must have got caught somehow). The bridle flopped against the pole, which frightened the whole lot and they started off at a gallop. The baker, seeing this, thought we were anxious to race him, and set sail too. Naturally his

increasing pace excited our horses more than ever, and the three with bridles pulled their hardest, while the loose one pegged along with his head in the air.

The off-horse being bitless, it was only the near-side rein that took effect on their mouths, so the end was that we edged nearer and nearer to the pavement, till, at last, the leaders turned and jumped on to it. At the same moment Captain Carnegie (who, luckily, was just sitting behind the box) leapt to the ground, and made a grab at the loose wheeler, catching him by the nose, and so saved us from some trouble. The leaders, in the meantime, had run straight into a draper's shop, and were curveting about on the top of four or five school children, whom they had hustled to the ground.

It looked very nasty for a minute, but they were mercifully extracted all unhurt, and a few coins soon mollified their gaping parents.

*Apropos* of having the leaders' reins through the top terret, it is supposed to look smarter, but that it is not a very good plan is proved

by the aforesaid catastrophe. The rings on the wheelers' throat-lashes are really much better for ordinary use.

My father used to drive a great deal, and, before he joined the Four-in-hand Club, he used to drive the Exeter and London mail-coachs regularly, three or four times a week, fifty years ago, when he was in the Ninth Lancers. It must have been hardish work, for he drove all night. He started at seven p.m. after his day's soldiering, and drove forty-four miles each way, getting back to barracks at seven p.m. next morning.

He tells me they only took eight passengers with them, four inside and four out, besides the coachman, and the guard who sat by himself behind, with his feet resting on the lid of the box in which lay the mail-bags, and always armed with two pistols and a blunderbuss, besides the horn.

There is nothing so pretty as hearing a coach-horn really well blown, and very few indeed can do it properly. It is, unfortunately, a thing which people have

no conscience about attempting, though their listeners are not left in doubt as to whether they are proficient in the art from the first moment they seize the instrument. How senseless of failure they are, too, as they puff out their cheeks in fatal perseverance, while tears start from their eyes, and the noise!—well, that once heard, is not easily forgotten. Though it is not within the province of a coachman, it is well to know how to make “music on three feet of tin,” for it is often very necessary to arouse sleepy carters and all the other drowsy souls who encumber the earth and the Queen’s highway.

Like catching a whip, it is an impossible thing to explain, beyond saying that you should begin by putting the tip of your tongue *into* the mouthpiece, and bring it sharply out again with a little TIP sort of sound, and without puffing out your cheeks *at all*. The higher the notes you want to get, the harder you should compress your lips to the mouthpiece. And after all is said and done, the horn it is that



generally retains the mastery, and blessed indeed is he who achieves anything beyond the air generally associated with the decrease of our ancient friend the cow.

The first tandem I ever drove was a long time ago, when I was quite small, and exceedingly proud I was of my turnout. It was very smart, all *white*.

It certainly had the merit of being unique, for my wheeler was a milk-white goat of tender years, while my leader was a disreputable-looking old bull-dog of equally snowy hue, and the harness was — well, pocket-handkerchiefs — mostly *other* people's.

I drove them in a little go-cart on low wheels, and they went very well, poor little things, though I always had to run in front myself and call them, if I wanted them to go at all fast.

That tandem came to a very sad and tragic end, for I grieve to say that, after many months of close friendship, my leader found it in his heart to devour the wheeler, which black deed brought my tandem to an abrupt termination.



Some years ago I got a lot of practice driving a scratch team down from Banffshire to Fife. A long journey, which took three days to accomplish, and over a very rough road too, for the first stage was forty miles right across the moors. Splendid wild scenery, but most horrible going, up hills and down dales, through water courses, and scrambling along old stage-coach roads, which could hardly be dignified now by the title of tracks. We scrambled up and down the steepest of mountains, and altogether felt rather relieved when at length we deserted the moor and gained the level road quite close to Balmoral.\* It is a beautiful road from Balmoral into Braemar, broad and level, with wide verges of grass on either side, and bordered by fir trees, lighted up here and there by the silver stems and golden leaves of graceful birches, while the river Dee dances along over the

\* Balmoral, with its grey pepperpots and tunnels, standing out closely against the dark background of pine trees and fir woods, and overshadowed by the high mountain of Loch-na-gar, veiled by the soft, blue haze of distance peculiar to the Highlands.

rocks and stones by the side of the road, brawling its running accompaniment to the rattle of the bars and the rhythm of the horses' hoofs. Passing below the "Lion's Face," and just outside the beautiful "policies" of Invermark, we trotted cheerily into the little town of Braemar, and there put up for the night.

The second stage was further still, and we guessed it at about sixty miles on to Perth.

Happily the horses came out looking fresh and fit, having fed and rested well, and, by ten o'clock, we were once more on the move.

This time the roads were better, but still rather elementary in some places, and we encountered several of those 'old hogbacked bridges which are very trying to the pole, and more than likely to break it as it jerks up, on the top, when the leaders are going down one side, while the wheelers are still climbing up the other. We stopped an hour at Blair Athole on the way, and fed the horses, while we ourselves had lunch.

The team was pretty well steadied by this time, and as easy to drive as a single horse; though, of course, it needed judgment to keep them trotting steadily on for the ten or eleven hours it took to do the journey.

The last stage, from Perth to Fife, was on the beautiful old north road all the way, and, as it was only a distance of twenty miles, we did it leisurely, and turned into our own stable-yard about three hours after we started.

It was great fun, and, after driving for so long, I felt I could have gone on for weeks, but for an acute knowledge of where every bone began and ended in both my arms and back.

We accomplished that same journey twice that year; the first time in spring, and again in September we came down after the grouse-shooting with a different team. That second time was not quite such a success, as the cold was something frightful, and the hurricanes that swept over the tops of those moorland hills nearly blew us all away (we had a brake instead of the coach, as being

lighter for the horses and handier for the luggage, etc.). The whole of the first two days it *poured* unceasingly, a good, honest, unrelenting deluge, and I never shall forget our plight on arriving at Blair Athole, soaked to the skin, while my coat pockets were so full of water that my pocket handkerchief was floating about on the surface like a boat on a pond.

We dried ourselves as best we could at the kitchen and laundry fires of the hotel, but we were just as sopped as ever ten minutes after we had started again. However, 'tis a poor heart that never rejoices, and we all revived later in the evening, after we had become dry and warm and *recurled* (which is very important to a lady's happiness). *Nothing* makes one feel so miserable and dejected as the knowledge one is "quite unbanged," as an American was once heard to exclaim, on catching sight of her straightened fringe in the looking-glass.

I have always been very fortunate in my cargo, which makes a vast difference to one's pleasure in driving.

I do not object to my passengers clinging on to the carriage, nor even to their pinching each other, but people who shiver and squeak, and, worse than all, make clutches at the reins, ought really to be condemned to take the air in handcuffs, or else to walk.

My particular friends have always rather erred on the side of foolhardiness, and I shall never forget my intense surprise at the rashness displayed by a large party at a house where I was staying two years ago. Our host, being the possessor of a very nice team, had promised to drive us over to an Agricultural Show about to be held in an adjacent town on a certain Wednesday. We were all looking forward to our outing with great glee, and nothing occurred to agitate our minds until the very day of the anticipated treat, when early that morning a pencil scrawl was brought me from my host saying he had been suddenly called away to attend some important function at the opposite end of the country; he therefore could not come to the show, but if I cared to take his place

and drive his team they should be ready at eleven o'clock.

I immediately thought—the question was not so much would I like to drive the party, as would *they* like to be driven by *me*?

However, after most anxious and searching inquiries on my part as to whether they were all insured, to my amazement they bravely asserted they would in any case risk it and come!

So round came the coach. I must confess to a slight misgiving on beholding that the usual near wheeler had been put off leader for a change, and in his stead they had given me an ancient and ill-favoured roan mare, who, I knew, had never been driven in a team before.

No sign of apprehension escaped me, however, as I clambered sternly on to the box. The start was a little sketchy, as the roan mare began by making a series of low curtseys, instead of progressing in the ordinary way, while the ex-wheeler was a little out of his element too, as a leader. By the mercy of Providence I succeeded in landing my

coach-load safely through the narrow gateway, and on to the field (filled as it was by a stupid Scotch crowd) and I pulled up in triumph by the barrier of the show-ring.

I am afraid I must in honesty confess that I *did* run both my chariot and horses into one wire fence on the way—but the leaders would THINK, and the horses were all so determined, that *they* knew the way better than I did, that they had borne us half-way past the corner before I could get hold of them to turn down the way I wished to go. There was no harm done, luckily, and I managed to haul them out again undamaged, and proceeded without further misadventure.

There are not many things much more calculated to annoy, than a horse who always "*thinks*," the stupid beast who *will* stop at every shop passing through his own village on a Sunday, when he must surely see that all the shops are shut, or the animals who turn eagerly down every lane and corner that they come to, albeit they have passed by that road a thousand times before and have never been called upon to turn either to right hand or



to the left. And yet a horse who *wont* think is almost equally exasperating. Such a beast seems glad enough to lame himself or stamp on one's toes without thinking even for a moment whether it might be inconvenient or otherwise distasteful to his employers.

One thing I have forgotten to put down, is what to do in the event of a wheeler lying on the pole (which of course shoves it to one side, and the coach must needs follow in its train). Supposing, then, your off wheeler happens to be performing this antic and is pushing the whole coach by his weight to the left side. You should pull your leaders to the *right*, and, by so doing, make them pull the pole across until you get the concern straight again.

The only upset my father ever had with a team was caused by his omitting to do this, and that is why he told me never to forget it.

I have been implicated in many other strange drives, notably two with tandems and one with three horses abreast.

I will begin with the last one first, as it was a very transient experience.



One very snowy winter we had to take recourse to a sledge to get about the roads at all, and although it is very delightful at first, when one hopes that every night will bring a nice thaw (how the frozen-out fox-hunter prays for that night), after three or four weeks' incessant frost and snow the novelty of sleighing wears off and one longs for some new excitement.

We had arrived at these extremes, my father and I, so, struck by a happy inspiration, we one day determined to "yoke" three ponies abreast in our sledge and see what would happen. We had not long to wait for the result, for no sooner were they harnessed and we leapt in, than away they all went with one accord down the avenue as hard as ever they could rattle, kicking great hard snow-balls into our faces all the way. Down the hill and across the grass like mad things. My father put the whip between his teeth and held on with all his might. I relieved him of his whip and sat tight, until we reached a big beech tree, with a sort of mound round its roots. Here the ponies dis-

agreed as to which side they should go, but, to avoid any jealousy or ill-feeling, they settled the question by one going to the right, while the other two elected to take the left hand side of the tree. This fairly finished our flight, for the sledge dashed up sideways against the roots and then turned over like a turtle. Of course we were both precipitated on to the road and were dragged along some little way by the rugs. Fortunately there was a gate which happened to be shut a little further on, and this ended our troubles by stopping the ponies altogether, and there they all stood with their heads craning over the fence, while we picked ourselves up and disentangled ourselves from the *débris*. Luckily the sledge being so very near the ground we were not hurt, and really, being dragged along by the rugs was rather a pleasant sensation. Though it is a good thing to remember, when one is being run away with, under ordinary circumstances in a carriage, to undo the rugs and keep your legs clear, in case of accidents.

How often have rugs and petticoats caused

one to fall headlong in getting in and out of "machines" (as our Scotch people say). Never shall I forget one Sunday morning, on our arrival at the church door, when I proceeded (in all the glory of my Sunday-go-to-meeting apparel) to climb down from the dog-cart, which was pretty high and fitted out with the most inhuman arrangements of steps. I tripped jauntily off the first step towards the second when I became aware that my body was extended on the cold, cold ground, and my head was resting confidently between the horses two hind feet. What had happened? Oh, *only* my frock had remained swathed round the top step, that was all. Mercifully the horse was tame, and made no objection to my unexpected arrival among his hind legs. I had to crawl out from under the cart, covered with mud and speechless with fury. Two broken knees, and two scratched palms, gloves destroyed beyond all hope, and my hat jobbed over one eye, everybody in fits of laughter, of course, especially my own family. Why is it, I wonder, that one's own relations always

display such extreme lack of good taste on such occasions? I must say I arose from that puddle in anything but a Christian-like and Sabbatical frame of mind.

I fared better, however, than another young friend of mine, who, in dismounting out of the very same cart, turned a catherine wheel and alighted on the road with a broken arm.

Be cautious, therefore, and always scramble out of a cart or carriage backwards, and, if the step be high, see that your dress descends with you and does not remain at the top.

One of the tandem drives I mentioned happened some two years ago, when my sister and I were staying with some friends about sixteen miles from home. We had been out cub-hunting all morning, found an old fox, and had a capital run, which landed us quite close to our own front door just in time for luncheon. This, of course, we could not resist, so we put our horses in and to our joy discovered a dog-cart had arrived—sent by our kind hostess to convey us back to her house, while the groom led our horses home. Having sent them off under his charge we

proceeded to put the harness horse into his dog-cart, and were just about to start when a telegram arrived from my father (who was also away from home), ordering our groom to take a horse over to K— for him to hunt next day.

As "K" happened to be the very place we were starting for, we determined to take his horse over ourselves. But how? that was the question.

We did not quite like the idea of tying him on behind, for well we knew he would be certain to tumble over something during the journey and contrive to break his knees.

Why not tie him on in *front* we both exclaimed, with that "one great mind which jumps."

Of course that was obviously the way to get him over those intervening sixteen miles of hill.

As he was the bigger of the two, and had never been driven in tandem before, we thought we had better put him in wheeler. Hastily pulling out the horse which was already harnessed we proceeded to try and fit

our own rotund steed between the shafts. His figure, however, was hardly slim enough for the position, and he began to resent the suggestion with some asperity.

Satisfied that we should do no good with them that way on, we reversed the order; replacing the original horse in the wheel, we hitched our obese animal on in front. We then started. I must say he fired some most alarming salutes with his heels going down the avenue, and terrified us for the safety of our borrowed wheeler, but the ensuing hills very soon settled him down and brought him to reason, which was well for us, as we had not started on our journey till pretty late, and it was rapidly becoming dark. Needless to say we had no lamps, the road was horribly rough and mountainous, and we had still many miles to go. At last we turned in to the lodge gates and up the avenue at K—. It was dark enough outside on the road, where I could just see my wheeler's outline in the gloom, but here among the trees (for the approach is more of a wood than an avenue) it was so pitch dark I positively could not see my own hand in

front of me. Having no light, we proceeded by faith, and appeared to be getting on extremely well, when suddenly, with an awful jolt and a bump, the whole concern stopped short and I nearly flew off my perch with the jerk. My sister was out like a shot and got to the wheeler's head. He was still there, that she could feel; groping a little further she collided with the leader, he was there too, that was a comfort, anything further she could not discover without the aid of a light.

Fortunately we had provided ourselves with some matches just *in case*, and, on striking one, we discovered both horses standing on three legs, one of the leader's traces having caught round his off hind leg, while the other trace was twisted over the wheeler's near fore leg! They both behaved like true Britons, and waited patiently until we got them disentangled and set straight again, when we set off once more and managed to get to our destination without further mishap.

The last exciting drive I had with a tandem was again with my father, and again in the



snow. The roads were barely passable with snowdrifts piled up on either side six foot high or more. It so happened that Colonel Gardyne had been staying with us, and it behoved him to get away by a certain train on a certain day.

Inexorable to our entreaties to postpone his departure, we were obliged to accede to his request that he might be borne somehow to the station. As the roads were very bad and too heavy with snow for one horse, we selected another out of the stable and put him on in front; we then scrambled into the dog-cart and prepared for the worst. As it happened, however, we were *not* prepared for what followed. The leader had not been in before and did not fancy the game, nor did he approve of the snow walls; notwithstanding this we got to the station fairly intact and deposited our guest in safety.

We had not proceeded far on our homeward journey when a great black puffing engine made its appearance round a corner, with crimson eyes, and snorts, and noise, and all the honours attendant on a perambulating



thrashing machine. Horrid things they are at the best of times, but more especially objectionable when one has a couple of three-cornered horses, one behind the other. Of course the effect of this apparition was wild confusion, the leader waltzed round and round till he got tied up into a knot, then set to work, and kicked himself free, breaking every stitch of harness on his body.

We had no extra tackle (which was foolish), therefore the only thing to be done was to get him home. Luckily we were not far away, so I scrambled on to his back and rode him, using the remains of the pad as a pommel and got him in all safe.

My father having some business in the neighbouring town went on in the cart alone. Soon he overtook an ally, who, bent on the same errand, was stumping bravely through the slush (having wisely refrained from taking out his own horses on such a road). On being offered a lift he mounted gladly, thankful to curtail his disagreeable tramp, and reassured by the sight of a single and confidential-looking quadruped. His joy, however, was

shortlived, for the very next turn happened to lead straight up to our park gates. Dobbin (being one of the genus I object to so strongly who "*think*") instantly *thought*, and made a dive for the corner. The wheel, colliding violently against the curb-stone, precipitated the unfortunate passenger headlong into a snow-drift, where he remained half buried, with only a large pair of feet flapping in the air to indicate the spot where the casualty had occurred.

ROSIE ANSTRUTHER THOMSON.



TIGERS I HAVE SHOT.



## “TIGERS I HAVE SHOT.”

BY MRS C. MARTELLI.

MY personal experiences of tiger-shooting in India have been neither on a large scale nor of a very heroic and exciting nature; yet, such as they are, I gladly place them upon record for the sake of those who may not have had the good fortune to see sport of this particular kind. Tiger-shooting, however, has been so well and so often described that I cannot hope to be able to tell anything of a novel character about it.

It has been my good fortune to “assist” (in the French sense of the word) at the death of five tigers. And here I should premise that, according to the laws of Indian sport, a tiger is considered the trophy of the gun that first hits it, whether that shot prove fatal or not. As will be seen presently, I succeeded in killing the third of the five, but it was my husband’s tiger and not mine, as my first shot

missed it. I did *not* kill the first and second of the five, but they were my tigers because I was the first to hit them. In the case of the fourth tiger I was the first to hit, and with a second shot I killed it; but the tiger was mine by virtue of the first shot, not the second. This is a not unfair rule, because the first shot often proves fatal, even though for a time the tiger manages to get away, and if some rule of the kind were not in existence, and the tiger were supposed to belong to the gun that appeared to administer the *coup de grâce*, there would be a great deal of indiscriminate firing, which would result, to say the least of it, in the skin being hopelessly ruined.

But to come to my story. In January 1887, my husband, Colonel Martelli, who was at the time Political Agent and Superintendent of the Estates of Rewa, Central India (the Maharajah being a minor), was making his annual tour, and we were in camp at Govindghur, about fourteen miles from the capital. There were with us my sister, the agency surgeon and the usual tribe of camp followers.

After we had been in camp about a week, a shikari brought us news that there was unquestionably a tiger not many miles away. To discover more exactly where he was, buffaloes were tied as bait to trees in four or five places, at a radius of three or four miles from the camp, and we waited in much excitement for further intelligence. As apparel of a very noticeable or attractive character is obviously unsuited to a tiger-hunt, I gave my native tailor overnight some plain cotton material, and he presented it to me in the morning, dyed green and made up into a serviceable dress. He had also covered my Terai sun-hat with the same material. Early in the morning word came into camp that we were to be on the alert, and, about ten a.m., news reached us that the tiger had been seen.

We started off immediately, my husband and I on one elephant, and the doctor and my sister on another. Seated behind us in the howdah was a shikari, carrying our guns. *My* weapon was a 450 double express rifle, by Alex. Henry.



We had had Chota Hazrie, so took a lunch-breakfast with us. Passing on our way what we thought would be a charming spot for our *déjeuner*, we left our servant Francis there with our hamper. Imagine our disgust when, upon reaching this spot, hungry and expectant, on our return, we found that Francis had disappeared, and with him all traces of the hoped-for meal. It turned out afterwards that some bears had come unexpectedly upon the scene, and Francis had, not altogether unnaturally, sought refuge in flight.

Ignorant of the fate of our breakfast, however, we pushed on, and about two miles from camp met the head shikari—Mothi Singh by name. Acting under his instructions we dismounted and followed him through the jungle. We pushed along what professed to be a path, but of which all I can say in its favour is that it was slightly better than the jungle of grass and underwood through which it passed, more than once indeed boughs and branches had to be cut down to make it possible for my sister and myself to get along.

We at length reached a rock, fifteen or

twenty feet in height, on the summit of which Mothi Singh placed us, and past which the tiger would be driven. I was to have first shot. The beaters, three hundred or four hundred in number, now began their work, shouting, beating drums and tom-toms, blowing bugles, firing blank cartridges, and steadily pressing forward in our direction. We, of course, maintained the most profound silence, and watched with the deepest interest for the appearance of the tiger. As we waited, all sorts of creatures, scared by the beaters, passed us—pig and deer, pea-fowl and jungle fowl, the majestic sambhur, and the pretty nilghai, not to mention foxes and jackals, went by within shot, but for to-day, at anyrate, they were safe. At last came the tiger. He advanced like an enormous cat, now crouching upon the ground, now crawling forward, now turning round to try and discover the meaning of the unwonted noise behind him. When he was about eighty yards from us I fired and hit him on the shoulder; then the others fired, and the tiger bolted. At this moment Hera Sahib, the commander-in-chief of the Rewa

army, and who had been directing "the beat," came up on an elephant, and, as he had brought with him a spare elephant, my husband mounted the latter, and they went off together in search of the tiger, leaving us upon the rock.

Two hours later they came upon the wounded tiger hiding in the jungle. The moment he saw that he was discovered, he charged Hera Sahib's elephant, and the latter, being a young animal, bolted. The tiger then turned and charged the elephant my husband was riding, which stood his ground. The tiger, charged underneath the elephant, but fortunately my husband got a snap-shot at him and rolled him over. He crept into the jungle again, however, but was now past serious resistance, and although he made a brave attempt to reach his enemies, he was easily despatched. He measured over nine feet in length.

My husband's tour over, we returned to our head-quarters at Rewa, and a very few days later, in the dusk of the evening, news came that another tiger had been seen in the same

neighbourhood as that in which we shot the first. My husband and I started off at three the next morning in a dog-cart; our horse was only half broken in, and I was driving. About eleven and a half miles from Govindghar our steed deposited us in a ditch, and we were compelled to walk the rest of the way there. At Govindghar elephants were in waiting for us, and we made our way in much the same fashion as on the previous occasion to the rock of which I have already told. The beat, too, was precisely similar to the former one. Presently the tiger appeared. I was so struck by his magnificent appearance, that, although I was to have first shot, I waited so long that eventually my husband and I fired together. The tiger facing us, I fired again, and then, in his rage, he charged straight at the rock on which we were standing. As he came on I fired a third time, and hit him between the shoulders. He disappeared somewhere at the base of the rock, and, although he was out of sight, we could hear him growling with pain. We did not dare, of course, to come down from our

rock, as we had no idea where he was, or to what extent he was crippled, but, after waiting about half-an-hour, Hera Sahib came up on an elephant and killed him. It turned out that the tiger had crept under another rock at the base of that on which we were standing, and was too badly wounded to come out and face his foes. This tiger was a much handsomer, and a larger one than the first.

Not long after the above, my husband was appointed Political Agent, Eastern States, Rajputana, which consists of Bhurtpore, Dholepore, and Karowlie. Each state has its own Rajah. I did no more tiger-shooting until the early part of the year 1891.

In February then we went to Karowlie, and on our arrival there we were met by the Maharajah, who at once informed us that news had just arrived that a tiger was in the neighbourhood, and courteously asked us to accompany him in pursuit of it. We gladly accepted this invitation, and were told to hold ourselves in readiness, as

a gun would be fired from the palace as soon as definite information arrived, and it would then be necessary to start at once.

The gun was fired at about noon and off we went, the Maharajah and his retinue, and our two selves. We were conducted through very thick jungle to the Maharajah's shooting-box, about nine miles distant. We were able to ride only a portion of the way, part of the remainder I was carried in a "Tonjon" (sedan chair), and for the rest of the journey I had to walk and struggle through the dense jungle as best I could. The shooting-box we found to consist of a small stone tower, built on the edge of a ravine. We were posted upon the top of the tower, and the tiger was to be driven up the ravine and within shot of our rifles.

The Maharajah is a very keen sportsman and a capital shot, but with great politeness he insisted upon my firing first. Alas, when the moment arrived—and the tiger—the jungle was so thick that I could hardly see the animal, and, I regret to say, I missed him altogether. My husband fired and wounded

the tiger severely ; I then fired again and killed him.

News was brought to us not to leave our post as there was another tiger in the jungle. The Maharajah had been much put out at my missing my first shot and so losing the tiger, but insisted courteously on my having an opportunity of retrieving my disaster ; of course I was only too glad to avail myself of his kindness.

A few minutes later the second tiger appeared, and, getting a better view of him than of his predecessor, I succeeded in hitting him in the chest. The Maharajah then fired and put a second bullet into him ; I fired and gave him his *coup de grâce*.

Within a week news was brought to Karowlie that another tiger had made his appearance, this time about ten miles away, and in quite another direction. The whole country in this neighbourhood was cut up by ravines, and when we arrived at the place indicated to us, we found that there was no rock which we could turn into a citadel, no handy tree from whose branches we might



fire upon the foe, and of course no shooting-box ; and, as in addition, it was quite impossible to bring the elephants along, we had to take our stand on foot and hope for the best. Should the wounded tiger charge us, we should have to make sure of stopping him before he could reach us. With us, on this occasion, were three young officers, who had never been present at a tiger-hunt, and who probably had never seen a tiger out of the Zoological Gardens. Accordingly, they were allowed to draw for choice of places and for first shot. They naturally selected the coign of vantage, and between them slew the tiger. I did not even see him till he was dead. They went off immediately, in a great state of elation ; but the Maharajah told me that there was a panther in the jungle. Presently the animal came in sight with a tremendous rush, and I fired, wounding him severely ; but although we traced him for some miles we saw no more of him and he got away.

This is all I have to tell. If, from the description I have given, anyone should be inclined to say that the tiger does not appear



to have much chance of escape, the answer is that it is not intended that he should have any. Tigers are shot in India, not as game is in England for hunting, to give amusement to men, horses and dogs, not as in pheasant or partridge shooting, with a remote reference to the demands of the table, but to save the lives of the natives and their cattle. If you don't kill the tiger he will kill you. But although the odds are on the shikari and against the tiger, whether you fire from the back of an elephant, from the top of a rock, or in the branch of a tree, there is always room, unfortunately, for a misadventure, and consequently tiger-shooting will always be a useful school for endurance, judgment and self-reliance.

KATE MARTELLI.

RIFLE-SHOOTING.



## RIFLE-SHOOTING.

BY MISS LEALE.

AT the Bisley Meeting of 1891, I took part in some of the competitions open to all comers. The measure of success which I achieved has gained a publicity for which I was scarcely prepared, and has brought around me a group of correspondents who have plied me with questions as to my experience in rifle-shooting, and the rise and progress of my devotion to an accomplishment so unusual for ladies, and even deemed by many to be somewhat out of their reach.

I purpose, therefore, to put a few notes together, in which I shall endeavour to answer some of the questions proposed to me, and to relate such passages of my experience as may serve to encourage those of my own sex who may have some ambition in this direction.

It was a little more than four years ago when I first handled a Martini-Henry rifle. I was looking on at the shooting one afternoon at the Guernsey "Wimbledon," and wondered if it was a very difficult thing to hit the target, which appeared to me to be such a mere speck when seen from so great a distance. I had, some time before this, fired a few shots with a fowling-piece at an impromptu target, but rifle-shooting looked to me far more real and interesting. At length I succeeded in persuading my father to allow me to try my hand at a shot with a rifle.

I remember that there was some discussion, at that time, about the recoil, but as I was so very ignorant of the management and powers of the rifle, I did not give this really serious question the necessary attention. I believe that had I heard, at this early stage, as much about recoil as I have since, I should probably have been afraid to shoot with a Martini.

A certain militia man, who is now one of our best shots, related to me a curious incident which happened to him when he

first fired with a service rifle. He was shooting in the prone position; and, after pulling the trigger, he heard a great noise, and immediately there was a good deal of smoke about; but the rifle had disappeared. On looking round, however, he saw his rifle behind him! He had been resting the under part of the butt lightly on his shoulders, and holding the rifle loosely; thus the force of the recoil had actually driven it past him over his shoulder.

I have heard of many other cases of the recoil becoming dangerous; but I believe it is from fear of being "kicked" that recruits fail to hold their rifles properly while pulling the trigger.

In my own case, certainly, "ignorance was bliss"; for, in firing my first shot, I was enabled to give my whole attention to keeping the rifle steady, and placing it firmly against my shoulder for that purpose alone undisturbed by any fear of recoil. And I believe that this absence of fear is the chief reason why I have been able to use a Martini-Henry rifle without suffering from the recoil.

Thinking from the experience of my first shot that shooting was easy, I was anxious to go on with it. Many experienced shots volunteered information which was very helpful; but I soon discovered that I was wrong in thinking that rifle-shooting was merely a matter of seeing the bull's eye over the sights. The first difficulty was that of keeping the rifle steady. I had to learn exactly how to hold it and for this I had to study *position*.

I had fired my first shot in the kneeling position. I did not then know of any other, except the standing and lying down. The former I could not manage, as the rifle was too heavy to hold up without any support for the arms; and the lying down position seemed to me, then, to require a great deal of practice. This conjecture has been well justified by my subsequent experience. I have never since fired from the kneeling position, as a much better one was recommended to me, namely, the sitting position. In this way I can have a rest for both arms, which is an advantage over the other

method in which it is only possible to rest one.

Having chosen a position, I found that it needed a great deal of studying. It was then that I discovered another great difficulty, *i.e.*, that of pulling the trigger without disturbing the aim. I received some advice on this subject which at first sounded rather curious. I was told to squeeze the trigger "like I would a lemon" and to let it go off without my knowing. This accomplishment requires a great deal of practice, but is well worth the trouble of learning; for I am confident that it is the great secret of good shooting.

During my first few months of shooting, I only used to think of taking a correct aim at the bull's eye, and trying to keep still while pulling the trigger. I was so absorbed in this effort, that it did not occur to me for some time that there was much more than this dexterity to be gained in order to be sure of making a good score. There remained the great question of finding the bull's eye.

This, of course, involves the scientific



part of rifle-shooting; and although, at first, I was alarmed at the difficulty of the subject, I soon saw that the shooting would become tame and monotonous without it.

The range where I was in the habit of practising (and still do practise) is near the sea. The targets have the sea for a background, and, as is often the case near the sea, we have a great deal of wind. It was quite easy to understand that the wind would affect the course of the bullet; but it did not turn out to be so easy as it appeared, to calculate in feet and inches how much allowance should be made for this source of disturbance. Fortunately "young shots" are not expected to be able to find out this for themselves by the long and painful discipline of repeated failure; and it is always easy for them to obtain advice from persons on the range who have had more experience than themselves. I was very fortunate in that way myself, and feel very grateful for the good instruction I have received from several "crack-shots."

There are two things to be considered—the elevation and windage.

The elevation does not vary so much as the windage. Having once found the normal elevation of a given rifle for the different ranges, it will not afterwards need very great alterations. But the different effects of wind, light, and atmosphere upon it are interesting, and require careful attention.

If the wind is blowing straight down the range from the targets, it will naturally increase the resistance for the bullet. Also, by retarding its speed the trajectory will be lowered, thus causing the shot to strike below the spot aimed at. To counteract this the aim must be taken higher, but the rifle is so constructed that by raising the slide of the backsight a little, aim may be taken at the original spot.

When the wind is blowing towards the targets, from the firing point, it has little or no effect upon the bullet, as the speed of the latter is so much greater than that of the wind. A side wind will slightly

alter the elevation of the bullet, in a ratio to its strength.

Most good shots agree that it is safer always to take up the same amount of foresight into the alignment; as by taking a large foresight at one time and a small one at another, one is apt to get confused, especially when other matters have to be considered at the same time. But it must also be remembered that the different degrees of the light's intensity have a marked effect upon the appearance of the foresight, and must be allowed for. If the light is very dull, the foresight will not be very distinctly seen; and, unconsciously, more of it will be brought up. This has the effect of bringing up the muzzle end of the rifle, and of giving the bullet a higher trajectory, thus causing the shot to strike high. But, on the other hand, if the light is bright the foresight is easily seen, and less of it is unconsciously taken up, so causing the shot to drop. These differences in the appearance of the foresight are cor-

rected by raising the backsight in a bright light, and lowering it when dull.

Mirage and refraction are very troublesome matters to deal with, for the bull's eye appears to be where in reality it is not. And it is almost impossible to ascertain the allowances which should be made for this source of error without the advantage of a trial shot.

The condition of the atmosphere as to temperature and humidity has much to do with the fouling inside the rifle. In hot, dry weather it is apt to get hard and dry. After a few shots have been fired, it cakes and fills up the grooving of the rifle. Consequently the amount of the spin of the bullet is affected, often causing the shots to drop, and spoiling all chance of accurate shooting. This can be avoided by blowing down the rifle after each shot, when the moisture of the breath will greatly improve the condition of the encrusted barrel. Many rifle shots have indiarubber tubes for this purpose, and blow down the barrel

through them from the breech end. Some competitors even take more trouble; for, after each shot, they shut the breech, and get up from their position in order to blow down from the muzzle end. This method involves more exertion, but it is evident that any moisture blown down with one end stopped, and thus permitted to accumulate, must of necessity be more effective in cleansing the barrel.

In warm, damp weather, the fouling becomes moist and greasy, letting the bullet slip through easily. These differences in elevation caused through fouling can also be allowed for by altering the elevation on the rifle between the shots.

An ingenious little instrument called the Vernier is used for measuring the elevation. When it is considered, that, at 600 yards distance from the targets, the difference of  $\frac{1}{150}$ th of an inch on the backsight will be equal to half a foot on the target, it will evidently be of the greatest importance to be able to adjust

the sights accordingly. For this purpose Verniers are made so delicate as to move the backsight through such a small space as the  $\frac{1}{150}$ th of an inch at a time. By this means of adjustment, should a shot strike straight above the bull's eye, you have only to notice the exact amount of the error in inches, and then the elevation can be lowered  $\frac{1}{150}$ th of an inch, or a "degree" as it is called for every six inches the shot is above the mark; provided always that the other conditions are the same as before.

Theoretically, wind is far more easy to deal with than elevation; for, if the wind blows across the targets from the left, it would naturally drive the bullet to the right. Therefore, by aiming in the direction the wind is blowing from, proper allowance can be made. The difficulty lies in the practical part, *i.e.*, of judging exactly how far the bullet will be driven from its true course. Practice is the only possible teacher in this matter; and it is wonderful to see how some ex-

perienced shots will estimate the strength of the wind, acting only on their own judgment, and succeed in hitting the bull's eye at first shot, and especially when we learn that at 600 yards as much as fifteen feet of windage is sometimes required. But at times there seems to be a certain amount of chance attached to the "finding of the bull's eye." I have heard of a competitor who had fired several shots and could not find the bull's eye. He was firing in a competition called "Cartons," in which the most central hit takes the highest prize. After several unsuccessful shots, he wished to alter some part of his rifle and for this purpose turned it upside down. In doing so he accidentally pulled the trigger. This turned out to be a singular instance of good luck, for the shot not only was fired without harming anyone, but actually hit the very centre of the target! This undesigned shot proved to be the best Carton of the meeting, bringing the competitor a prize of several pounds. I have



often heard it said on the range that "there is no luck in shooting except bad luck;" and it certainly is very disappointing to lose several points in a competition before you succeed in finding the bull's eye; but it is still more disappointing, when, having found it, the wind keeps changing its force or direction, and so increasing your perplexity. The only consolation in this disagreeable experience is, that a great deal more is learnt from one bad score under these circumstances, than from many good ones made with a steady wind.

All my remarks have referred to target-shooting only, in those cases where competitors are not hurried, but can take their own time to point their sights and adjust them with "machines," carefully marking the allowance for windage on their sights, so that they may aim at the bull's eye every time, and have no more to think of but holding the rifle steady. I use all these helps myself, finding them a great advantage; and I



believe that studying all these minute but necessary particulars is a good training for those who may have to use their rifles for more serious purposes than competing for prizes at rifle meetings. For, although in practical shooting they will be obliged to use the rifle just as it is served out, they will prove themselves to be experienced shots, and know how to handle their weapons with that skill which is always the result of careful training and practice.

WINIFRED LOUISA LEALE.

DEER-STALKING AND DEER-  
DRIVING.



## DEER-STALKING AND DEER-DRIVING.

By DIANE CHASSERESSE.

DEER-STALKING is like marriage, it should not be "enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly or lightly," nor should it be undertaken by those who are weak and delicate, for it entails many hardships and much exposure to wet and cold.

Imagine the state of a thorough-bred racehorse, if it were kept standing for hours in a snowstorm, with no clothing on, directly after it had run a race. Yet, a like sudden change from violent exercise taken in great heat, to hours of immovability in the most bitter cold, is of constant occurrence when stalking deer in the late autumn, in the Highlands of Scotland. For instance, the stalker may have to toil with wearied feet up a steep hill, under the burning rays of an October sun, when, suddenly and unexpectedly,

some deer will come in sight, hurrying over the ridge in front of him to seek for shelter from an impending storm. Retreat is impossible, there is no time even to choose a hiding-place; the stalker must throw himself face downwards, most likely in the middle of a bog, and remain there without moving hand or foot as long as the storm lasts and the deer remain in sight. In the meantime the sun has vanished, and the day has changed from broiling heat to piercing cold; and, while the wind gets up and the hail beats pitilessly on his prostrate form, the stalker must be ready, with numbed and aching finger to pull the trigger of his rifle, the moment the darkness has lifted sufficiently, for him to make out which are the largest and most shootable deer.

It will be seen from this that deer-stalking is not all pleasurable excitement, and that those who go after deer must be prepared to endure a certain amount of physical discomfort. Pipes cannot be smoked, nor can whisky be imbibed within sight and within

shot of deer; neither can sandwiches be munched, nor may you even take a drink at a burn. The soul of the sportsman must soar above hunger and thirst—such luxuries as two o'clock lunch and five o'clock tea are not for him—even the simple use of a pocket-handkerchief is denied him under certain circumstances.

The paraphernalia needed by the stalker is very limited in extent. It consists of a rifle, a dozen cartridges, a telescope, and a long knife. Stout, easy-fitting nailed boots are *de rigueur* for walking; also thick stockings—not necessarily rough or irritating to the skin—and neutral-coloured clothes, light in weight. Nothing else is essential. I have given elsewhere a detailed description of the dress I myself found most suitable for the hills, so I will only repeat here that it should be of either drab or grey cloth—water-proof, but not air-proof—with a dash of pink, green, or orange in it according to the prevailing colour of the ground over which you have to stalk. A long grey macintosh of the best quality

can be carried in the forester's pocket and put on during heavy storms. This should have a separate hood, which may be used either to sit on, or as a protection to the head and neck from rain and wind.

The fewer people the stalker has to accompany him the more likely he is to get sport. One man to carry the rifle, or stalk for him, is sufficient. It is quite unnecessary to have a second forester with dogs, as they only disturb the deer and are seldom required.

Foresters, whether from an imperfect knowledge of English or from "thinking the more," are usually a silent and uncommunicative race. The sort of way an ignorant—or supposed to be ignorant—sportsman is treated when sent out with an experienced stalker for the first time, is much after this fashion.

The forester shoulders the rifle and goes up the side of a hill with quick, elastic step, and you follow with aching muscles and panting breath. At last there is a halt, and he takes out his glass and looks care-

fully over the ground, first searching the places where deer are usually to be discovered, then scanning the rest of the vast expanse of hill and valley spread out before him. You, also, take out your glass and strain your unaccustomed eye in looking for deer. After a time you find some, and wonder if by chance they have escaped the keen eye of the forester, for he has shut his telescope, and is silently descending the hill again.

"Sandy!" you call out.

"Surr—mem?" correcting himself as he remembers your sex.

"Did you see those deer?"

"Hwhich deer was it?"

"There are some deer feeding on that green patch, didn't you see them?"

"Ou—ay."

"But wouldn't they do to go after?"

"They're no verra bug, but I'm thunkin' one of them nicht do," and Sandy moves on again.

"But, Sandy!"

"Surr—mem!"



"Why can't we go after the one that *might do?*"

"We'll require to go round a bittee and come doon on them."

To "go round a bittee" you find to your cost means to go right back to the bottom of the hill whence you came, to tramp miles round the base of the mountain, and finally to climb up over the top so as to come down on the deer. On the way you come across some small staggies which decline to move, being quite well aware that they are not worth shooting. Fearing they will spoil all your sport by moving the other deer, Sandy lies still and taps two stones together to frighten them a little, but they still refuse to go away and only stare stupidly at you.

"Ye'll jist wave yer hwhite mop," whispers Sandy.

You wonder what he means, as you do not generally carry *mops* about the hills. Then Sandy, seeing your bewilderment, makes a gesture with his hands over his face in the most solemn manner,

and you are reminded of the children's game :—

“I wipe my face with a very good grace,  
Without either laughing or smiling.”

and produce your white pocket-handkerchief—which certainly, there is no denying, *has* been used as a mop pretty often on the way up—and waving it at the deer, have the satisfaction of seeing them trot away in a direction where they will do no harm.

After that Sandy says nothing more, but goes trudging on ahead till he stops to take the rifle out of its case and load it. Then he begins to crawl very slowly and cautiously, taking care not to scrape the heather, or knock the stones, and you do exactly the same till you join him behind a big boulder; when he puts the rifle in your hand, saying in a whisper,—

“Noo then, ye'll tak yon beast that's feeding to the west.”

And you look up excitedly, not knowing in the very least the whereabouts of the deer; but while you are trying to make

out which is the "beast that is feeding to the west," a greater beast that is feeding to the east, in the shape of a hind, has already made you out, and the whole herd of deer have galloped away without giving you the chance of a shot. You turn and look blankly at Sandy, and Sandy looks disgustedly at you, and behind your back he exclaims, that you "jist mak' him seek."

Little of the science of deer-stalking can be learnt from following blindly behind a silent forester; though no doubt a novice would get more deer and disturb less ground by putting himself entirely into the hands of a first-rate stalker than by attempting to go his own way, and acquiring experience at the expense of repeated failure.

The two great difficulties with which the amateur has to contend are, the wrong impression given by the appearance of ground when seen from a distance, and the imperfect knowledge of the direction from which the wind will blow when he

gets within reach of deer. The other difficulties, such as keeping out of sight of the deer he wishes to shoot, and avoiding other deer or sheep, can be overcome, with practice, by any intelligent person; but to know the direction in which certain winds will blow in certain places, is a constant puzzle even to the oldest and most experienced sportsman.

If a valley lies east and west, and the wind blows east or west, you can generally count on being able to stalk *up-wind*. But should the wind be *north* in a valley lying east and west, it will constantly blow *south* on the southern side of a northern mountain, or it *might* blow east or west. There is only one manner of ascertaining the direction of a light and doubtful breeze, and that is by continually plucking little bits of the fluff off your homespun coat, and allowing them to float about in the air.

Deer are far more frightened at getting the wind of a human being than they are at seeing him; consequently they will

gallop away faster, and run to a much greater distance after scenting a person than they will after seeing him. They are also far more frightened at sight of a man walking upright at a considerable distance, than at seeing one crouched up and immovable quite near them—though in the latter case he may be so close that his face, hands, and even the rifle are discernible.

When a seal is doubtful about anything floating on the water, it will take a long circuit round, and keep out of shot until it has got to windward of the suspicious object. Once to windward all doubt is at an end, and, if the object should prove to be an enemy, the seal will immediately disappear under water. But, fortunately for sportsman, deer are not clever enough to adopt this plan, or we should find stalking even more difficult than it is now. For if deer catch sight of a suspicious-looking object, the hinds generally come a step or two nearer to it, instead of going round to get the wind, and when they have quite decided that it looks like something un-

canny, they will go off with a bark, occasionally stopping to look back. In the meantime the stags will be preparing to rise, so you must be ready to seize your chance of a broadside shot—for a stag lying with face towards you, will generally, on rising, turn his body broadside before bolting away. Should the deer, however, get a puff of your wind, it is of no use to wait; you must either take a snap-shot at their retreating heels, or refrain from firing at all, and trust to getting another stalk when they have settled down again later in the day.

You can never, under any circumstances, take a liberty with the wind; but, on wet and stormy days, it is extraordinary how you may crawl about in full view of deer without frightening them, so long as they do not happen to be looking at you while you are actually moving. To begin with, the wet deadens any sound you may make in crawling; ferns do not crackle, nor does the grass rustle, and, as there is no light and shade, objects are less distinctly seen. But a sky line must always be avoided when possible,

or, if not, it should be crossed with the utmost care by keeping flat and moving slowly ; as deer are quick to note any strange excrescence on the edge of a hill.

There are only two really important things to avoid when out stalking. One is the unnecessary disturbance of deer by firing shots late at night, or by careless stalking—both of which will send them off the ground you are on, and over to that of your neighbour—and the other is shooting at deer when the chances are more in favour of wounding them than of killing them outright.

Sport is sometimes cruel—*though never so cruel as nature*, as any observer can bear witness—but that is no reason why sportsmen should be careless about giving unnecessary pain.

There are so many different sorts of rifles turned out by the various gunmakers, that it would be difficult to say which kind is the best. I have not had a large experience, but, having tried a single-barrelled Henry—with which I regularly missed—a double-barrelled Lankaster, and a Purdey, besides the various



kinds of small rifles made by Rigby, Adams, and Holland, I do not hesitate to say that the best shots I ever made were at running deer with an old-fashioned *muzzle-loader*, with solid conical bullets!

One of the great charms of deer-stalking, besides the delightful feeling of being out all day long in the fresh air surrounded by the most beautiful scenery, is, that there is so much variety in it, as no two stalks are ever in the least alike. One might go season after season over the same ground, but it would be impossible to shoot two deer under precisely similar conditions.

A beginner can scarcely understand the fascination which deer-stalking exercises over a more practised sportsman. When a novice is taken out, the stalker is naturally anxious to give him every chance, and, at the same time, is not over-particular about the size of the deer—which may possibly be missed; so he generally manages to bring him up to within easy distance of a single stag, standing broadside. The novice knows nothing of the intricacies of the stalk, or of the difficulties



which have been overcome. He has, perhaps, been taken up one deep burn, and brought down another on the same hillside, possibly without having had any climbing, crawling, or wading to do; after which he is told to look between some tufts of heather over the edge of a bank, when he will see the stag feeding just below. He then raises up the loaded rifle, and, feeling rather as though he were going to shoot at a red cow, calmly takes a deliberate aim, with his elbows resting on the bank, and hits the beast right through the heart. The whole business has appeared so easy that he cannot understand the excitement of the stalker over it; and he feels rather ashamed than otherwise of the fuss that is made about him on his return home. But, the next time he goes out, he may have to shoot immediately after a stiff climb uphill; the deer is further off than he thinks, and is very much the same colour as the ground; he is out of breath, and more careless about his aim, and the consequence is that he misses it clean, and fires the second barrel with no better result. After this, the

novice begins to see that it is not altogether so tame and easy a business as it appeared at first; and, when next he gets a chance at a stag, his heart will commence to beat, he will feel nervous about his aim, his knees will tremble and his hand shake, and he will at last feel that there is some excitement about deer-stalking after all.

Deer-driving is by no means such good sport as deer-stalking. When deer are driven, if they go the way that is intended—which depends chiefly on the weather and not at all on the skill of the sportsmen—all that is necessary to obtain a large number of stags is to keep a cool head, and to take a steady aim. But these qualifications are usually just those which are conspicuous by their absence at the generality of deer drives; consequently, the number of shots that are fired at deer—all within easy distance—in proportion to the number of deer slain or wounded, is quite remarkable.

I have often wondered how soldiers behave on a field of battle, where there is danger to

life and limb, added to the noise, smoke, bustle and excitement. *Do they ever hit a man at all except by accident?* And is it likely that the time, ammunition and money annually wasted on firing at a mark will teach men not to lose their heads on a field of battle, with the enemy advancing towards them, when they cannot even keep cool at a deer drive, where there is absolute silence and stillness, and the deer are often too frightened and bewildered to do more than stand still to be shot at!

It would be very interesting to keep a record of the number of drives which come off properly, compared with those which are failures; and of the number of shots fired at each drive, in proportion to every deer killed. I also fancy it would improve the sport in a forest far more if a record were kept of all the misses which were made out stalking, than if a high average of weights were insisted on, as this can only be accomplished by sparing the old deer, which, being past their prime and deteriorating every season,

should certainly be killed at the expense of the average.

Deer-driving, more than any other kind of sport, depends on weather. When out stalking one generally succeeds in getting more deer on a stormy than on a fine day, but with driving it is just the reverse. The day cannot be too fine, as the mist and rain, which so constantly accumulate about high mountains, are the chief reasons why drives are such frequent failures.

The way a drive is arranged is as follows. Every available stalker, forester and gillie is sent out before daylight to make an immense circle round the corries and mountains from which the deer are to be driven. Unfortunately the mist usually comes low down in the night, and the men cannot possibly tell, when they make their early start, whether it will lift or not.

Deer have certain passes which they use when going from one corrie to another, and, if they are disturbed, they make for one of these passes *up-wind*. But when everything has been settled, the guns are placed in a

pass which is *down-wind* to the deer, and out of sight of the corrie, into which they are being collected by the beaters.

It is a very difficult matter to force deer to go *down-wind*, as it is against all their instincts to do so, and, if they have had much experience, they will be perfectly aware that men with rifles are awaiting them on the ridge, and, instead of going forward over the pass, they will break back at the last minute and rush through the beaters—who can only pelt them with sticks and stones—rather than face the known danger of the guns in front of them.

In a deer drive it is necessary for the day to be clear, in order that the beaters may see each other as well as the deer. It is equally important that the deer should see the beaters, as these latter are placed as stops to prevent them going to the passes *up-wind* where there are no guns. If the deer are quite determined not to go *down-wind* over a pass, nothing that the beaters can do to force them will make any difference, and the drive is consequently

spoilt. If the wind changes, or does not blow fair, the guns know at once that their chance of sport is over, for deer would rather face an army which they can see, than a puff of wind from an unknown foe.

Shooting at driven deer is much less fatiguing than stalking. The drive is fixed to come off at a certain hour, and the sportsmen ride ponies or walk to their posts, each carrying his own rifles—as the foresters are all employed in beating. The ponies are then left in charge of some boys, and each man is allotted a post in which he can make himself comfortable, put on his cloak and eat his lunch; pipes also are not forbidden for a while. But, after a bit, he must, on no account, move or leave his place, even if there is snow on the ground and he is perished with cold, for it is very possible that a few deer, not belonging to the drive, might be feeding just below the ridge of the hill, and, seeing other deer disturbed and coming towards them, they would probably feed quietly over the pass close to all the guns. If they were to see anyone move,

they would at once bolt back whence they came, and every deer in sight would know that they were fleeing from danger, and would refuse to come up the pass. But if they were allowed to move quietly on till all the guns were passed, they would soon disappear, and their fresh tracks would be of use in keeping the deer which followed from being suspicious of any lurking danger.

The first deer to appear over a pass are usually a hind and calf; and hearts begin to beat furiously as, after many hours of waiting, they walk slowly past the line of guns, pricking their long ears forward and staring right and left suspiciously. Suddenly the hind gives a start—she has come across a footprint; she sniffs at it, quickens her pace, and trots away with her little calf beside her. All at once she gets a puff of the wind and away she goes—bark, bark, bark—but as there are no other deer in sight she can do no harm. Then some more hinds come on, followed by a few small staggies, and the excitement among the guns becomes intense as they know now that the drive has begun.



As the first deer get the wind and begin to gallop, a grand Royal appears. He passes most of the rifles scathless—for there is no greater crime than to fire at one of the first few deer and so turn all the others back—but the last gun, seeing that there are now plenty of good stags over the brae, lets fly at him and may bowl him over (this is purely imaginary, for my experience is that he *does not* bowl him over), then crack, crack, go the other rifles as barrel after barrel is fired—two or three rifles to each man, and two barrels to each rifle—and the fat and heavy deer come panting by, bewildered by the incessant firing and the whizz of the bullets about their ears, driven forward by the shouts of the beaters behind, who are pressing them on to their death, and terrified when some magnificent beast makes a plunge forward on receiving its death-wound, and tears up the soft ground with its hoofs as it rolls over and over, its thick horns crashing against the rocks. Then the last and heaviest of the deer come rushing down the pass followed by the beaters, capless and perspiring. The



ground is strewn with dead and dying, the sportsmen leave their posts and each claims his deer (many more claims being made for the large than for the small ones); the dogs are let loose after the wounded, and thus the most successful drive of the season comes to an end.

The ponies which have conveyed the sportsmen up the mountain now come in useful to carry home the dead beasts; and, in the evening, after dinner, the ladies, in their dainty dresses and flashing diamonds, come out across the yard to inspect the trophies of the chase which are laid out on the ground in front of the larder; while the weird and fantastic scene is lighted up by blazing torches held aloft by kilted Highlanders.

DIANE CHASSERESSE.

S H O O T I N G.



## SHOOTING.

BY LADY BOYNTON.

“The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill.”

“A mingled yarn—good and ill together.”

A FEW years ago a “shooting-lady” was almost as much a *rara avis* as the Great Auk; if here and there one member of the sex, more venturesome than her fellows, were bold enough to take to the gun in preference to the knitting needle, she was looked upon as most eccentric and fast, and underwent much adverse criticism. Now, however, *nous avons changé tout cela*. Ladies who shoot, and who shoot well, too, are springing up on all sides, and the clamour raised by their appearance is gradually subsiding. There are still dissentient voices here and there, it is true, voices which proclaim aloud that women have no place in the covert

and among the turnips, and that the cruelty of the sport should be an insuperable objection to their joining in it. A discussion of all these pros and cons is, however, outside the scope of these notes, we have simply to deal with facts as they stand, and, undoubtedly, the "shooting-lady" is now as much an established fact as is her sister the "hunting-woman."

That a woman who is fond of sport need lose nothing in grace, charm, or refinement, we have ample evidence to show. She does not necessarily become masculine either in manner or conversation; but she should, nevertheless, endeavour to master the rudiments of whatever sport she engages in; and it is with the hope of assisting some of my fellow-sportswomen to accomplish this, that I here record some of my experiences, not omitting my mistakes, and adding a few hints to beginners; though I regret that I have no moving accidents by flood or field, nor "hairbreadth 'scapes" to recount!

There is certainly a pleasant amount of excitement about shooting — not perhaps

equal to that afforded by "forty minutes without a check," but quite enough to make one willing to brave the elements, even on a raw November morning, and to stand with one's fingers aching with cold behind a fence waiting for the advent of that little brown bird who will flash past you like a meteor—alas! too frequently only to leave a feather or two floating behind him, and then to continue his course rejoicing!

I well remember the first running rabbit I ever killed. I was armed with an old-fashioned muzzle loader—we were walking round the hedgerows in some pastures. The rabbit was sitting in a tussock about thirty yards from the fence. I cautiously advanced in such a manner as to get a crossing shot. The rabbit was put up, and I, taking a *very* deliberate aim, had the intense satisfaction of seeing him double up just as he reached the fence! *What* a moment! No 'Royal' killed at 140 yards could have afforded more delight than did that wretched little bunny.

Of course, previously to this, I had fired

at a mark and at sitting objects, in order to get into the way of handling the gun, aiming and so forth.

It is of the *first* and greatest importance on beginning to shoot to learn to be careful, and the golden rule is, *always* to handle a gun as though it were loaded and cocked; the habit once acquired, it is just as easy to carry a gun safely as not.

Coolness and confidence are equally necessary—but practice alone will bring these. A beginner is apt to be flurried when the game gets up; she sees nothing else, thinks of nothing else but killing it, and takes no account of the beaters, guns, or dogs surrounding her. She points the gun at the bird or beast, and perchance (horrid thought!) follows it all round the compass with her finger on the trigger! Wherefore it is better she should not take the field with other guns (unless she wishes to make enemies of her best friends), until she has full command over the gun and can put it up easily and quickly. If the game gets up too near, she must wait till it has

reached the proper distance, *then* raise the gun to her shoulder and fire at once. This is the only way to become a quick and steady shot.

*Apropos* of following; once when grouse-driving I was placed in a butt between two other guns, both of them strangers to me. They looked *very much* askance at me, and I fancy one of them thanked his stars he'd insured his life the week before! The one in the left-hand butt at once moved both his "guards" on to the side of the butt next me. Soon three birds, the forerunners of the army to follow, came over between my right-hand neighbour and me, two of them making straight for his butt. To my surprise he did not fire. The third bird I hit with my first barrel, and seeing as it passed me that it had a leg down, I turned round and killed it going away from me with the left barrel. After the drive was over I asked him why he hadn't shot. "To tell you the truth," he said, "I was watching you. I was a little anxious to see if you would *follow* that bird, but after



that, I saw you were *all right!*" My left-hand warrior confessed, later on, that he had been peppered by the gun on the other side of him! Whereat I chuckled!

As to the gun used, everybody must please themselves. I shoot with a 20-bore, the left barrel slightly choked, weight 5 lbs., and loaded with  $2\frac{1}{4}$  drachms black powder,  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. No. 6 shot. For covert shooting, E. C. or Schulze is better, it is quicker up to the game and almost smokeless.

A 16-bore makes killing easier, but the extra weight, at the end of a long day, counterbalances this advantage. I shot with a 28-bore belonging to a friend one day last winter, and was perfectly astonished at the way and the distance it killed, but you have to be *very* dead on to make good practice with so small a bore. A gun to fit you should come up to the shoulder quite easily, and, without any adjusting, you must bring the sight straight on to the object. If you see all down the barrel, the stock is too straight, if, on the contrary, you see nothing but the breech, it is too much

bent and you will shoot under everything. But I would advise the beginner to go to the "Worth" of London gunmakers (Mr Purdey), put herself in his hands, and, like the sartorial genius of Paris, he will turn her out fitted to perfection. An indiarubber heel-plate is sometimes a wise precaution, to avoid a bruised shoulder and arm, which if you happen to be going to a ball, does not perhaps add to your beauty !

The left hand should be held *well forward*. This gives much more power over the gun, it also looks much better. With regard to the position of the feet, it is well to recollect that elegance is compatible with ease !

It is a matter of some difficulty, at first, to judge distance correctly. The novice generally begins by blowing her game to bits, to make sure of killing it, I suppose, though in reality this makes it far harder. The other extreme, firing very long shots, is equally reprehensible, as nine times out of ten the game goes away wounded, even when occasionally it is dropped by a fluke. Any distance between twenty and forty yards is legitimate, though the

latter is rather far for a hare going away from you.

*Never* hand the gun cocked to an attendant, and always unload when getting over a fence, and on putting the gun down for luncheon.

Now for a few words on aiming ; but I must here protest that this does not profess to be a shooting "Bradshaw," but merely, as it were, an A B C guide !

For a beginner, no doubt the easiest way, in the case of any ordinary crossing shot, is to put up the gun on the object, then fling it forward as far in front as is thought fit, and fire, but, after a time, I think this kind of double action will no longer be found necessary. The gun will be put up *at once* in front of the game, the eye taking in by instinct and practice the line of the object, and experience telling how far in front of the game to hold the gun. This is certainly true with regard to ground game. Quite high-class aiming is to put the gun up a little before the head of the object, and swing the gun forward with the bird, pulling the trigger *without stopping* the gun. This is beyond doubt the best and

most correct method, but not easy to accomplish.

I take it for granted that you shoot with both eyes open.

It is impossible to lay down a rule how far in front to hold the gun for a crossing shot. It depends upon the pace the bird is going, and its distance from you, but, roughly speaking, for an ordinary shot at twenty-five yards, the object's own length in front *may* be enough (but I write this with some diffidence). For a driven bird or high pheasant, my experience is, you can't get too far ahead! For a rabbit or hare going away from you aim at the back of its head; coming towards you, at its chest.

One of the greatest charms of shooting is its "infinite variety." Let us take for example, to begin with, a day's covert shooting.

The waggonette with its pair of matched bays (of course we have the best of everything—on paper) stands at the door. You pack yourselves in, with a goodly amount of rugs and furs, and away you go, ten miles an hour, through the park. There has

been a sharp frost, the cobwebs are all glistening in the sun, and the road rings under the horses' feet in a manner ominous to the lover of the chase proper, but music in the ears of the shooting-man. The leaves are mostly off the trees, but here and there some few remaining ones shiver gently to the ground; the bracken is brown and withered, and rustles crisply as the deer brush through it, startled at the sight of the carriage. The wind is keen and biting, but you turn up your fur collar and defy "rude Boreas."

Arrived at the starting point you take, on your way to the first cover, two or three rough grasses. The rabbits having been previously ferreted and otherwise harried, have forsaken their strongholds, and have, so to speak, gone under canvas—they are dotted about all over the fields in seats. (It is astonishing how easy it is, until the eye becomes practised, to miss seeing a rabbit in a seat.) You form a line, a beater or two between each gun across the pasture. Before you have gone ten yards, a rabbit

jumps up from underneath a beater's foot, and makes tracks for the nearest hedgerow or plantation, only, however, to fall a victim to the right-hand gun. The report alarms another, who, without delay, seeks to follow in the steps of his predecessor, but a charge of No. 5 interferes with his scheme, and he also succumbs to fate.

Soon the fun becomes "fast and furious," four or five rabbits are on foot together, necessitating quick loading and steady shooting. Here one breaks back through the line, and comes past you full tilt. You take a rapid look round to see that no unlucky beater lurks in the rear picking up the wounded—bang—ah! you didn't allow for the oblique line of bunny's course, and were half a foot behind him. The second barrel, however, stretches him a corpse on the field of battle.

At the end of the pasture runs a narrow strip of plantation. Here the shooting is more difficult. The brambles are very thick; you have to take snap-shots as the rabbits bounce from one thicket to another. You

must fire where you think he'll *be* (not where he is), but even this manœuvre is not always successful, as that old man who has been acting as stop at the end of the strip will tell you. "Nobbut eleven!" says he, "there's bin fortty shots fired! Ah coonted 'em!" Conscience-stricken, you look at one another, and positively tremble before the scorn depicted in that old man's eye.

Then comes a small outlying covert. Two guns placed back to back command the end—the rest go with the beaters. A wood-pigeon is the first to make a move, which it does with a tremendous bustle and fuss; it affords a pretty shot, coming straight overhead, and falls with a "plop" behind you. Next to take alarm is an old hare. She scampers through the brushwood, staring *behind* her, and makes for her usual exit—a hole in the hedge, little knowing, poor thing, that she is galloping straight into the jaws of death, for your neighbour's unerring weapon promptly does its duty.

Then, maybe there arises a wild shout, a discordant "Tally-ho!" followed by sundry



yells of all shades, and a banging great fox breaks away across the stubble, disappearing in the fence only to emerge again in the pasture. I think a fox one of the most beautifully-proportioned animals there is. He is built on such racing lines! with those long galloping quarters, that deep chest, and muscular neck. Look at him as he steals away over the grass without an effort; he doesn't appear to be going any pace at all, and yet in a moment he is out of sight! No hurry, my friend! You may take it easy to-day, but in a very short time you'll dance to another and a quicker tune played by 17½ couple of the "best hounds in England!"

Meanwhile, four rabbits have taken advantage of your soliloquy to make good their escape. You fire a snap-shot at one as he bobs into the fence. "Mark over," and a pheasant whirrs over the top of the wood. You hastily cram a cartridge into your gun, raise it and pull, only to find that you've forgotten to cock the right barrel; you change on to the left trigger, but this has put you "off," the pheasant goes scathless, and is



handsomely knocked down by your companion-in-arms. Perhaps this is an argument in favour of a hammerless gun !

On reaching the big covert the aspect of things is changed. The guns are placed at intervals down the rides, and the beaters go to the far end to bring it up towards you. It is always well to let the guns on either side of you, know your whereabouts, both for your own sake and theirs. Only let us hope you won't meet with the treatment that a friend of ours received. He was placed next to a very deaf old gentleman. Aware that he could not make him hear by calling, or (which is much preferable) by whistling, he took out his handkerchief and waved it to attract his attention. The old gentleman caught sight of it, put up his gun and took a steady and deliberate aim at it ! You can easily imagine how our friend ducked and bobbed, and threw himself prone on the grass round the corner !

After a pause a distant shot is heard, then another, and soon you hear the tap tap of the beaters, and "Rabbit up," "Mark over," "Hare to the right," may be continually

heard, unless, as in some places, silence is enjoined on the beaters. "Mark cock" is, however, everywhere an exception to this rule, and at the magic words, every gun is on the alert! I never understand why a woodcock should be productive of such wild excitement and reckless shooting as it generally is! The bird flits through the trees a little above the height of a man's head, looking as easy to kill as an owl, but it is a gay deceiver, for barrel after barrel may discharge its deadly contents at it, and still that brown bird flits on as before, turning up and down as it goes. Of course (on paper) *you* are the one to kill it, when you are loaded with congratulations—their very weight testifying how unexpected was the feat. Rather a doubtful compliment! Half the wood being shot, the guns move round to the outside. What has hitherto been done, has been chiefly a means to an end. The pheasants have been driven with the object of getting them into this particular corner. Possibly the wood stands on the slope of a hill; this gives the best shooting, as the birds fly over the valley

affording high and difficult shots, especially if coming down-wind. I think there is nothing prettier than to see real high birds well killed. They fall like stones, with heads doubled up—not waving down, wings and legs out-stretched like the arms of a semaphore!

“Thick and fast they come at last,  
And more, and more, and more.”

But do not let this tempt you into firing too quick. Pick your bird and kill it, though I grant you this is not an easy thing to do. Many men seem quite to lose their head at a hot corner. They fire almost at random, though, in the case of a few birds coming, they will scarcely miss a shot.

By this time it is growing dusk. The December afternoon is closing in. There is a mist rising from the river, the air feels damp and chill, and your thoughts turn to a bright fire, a tea-gown, and those delicious two hours before dinner.

To my mind, grouse-shooting is the cream of sport. To begin with, Scotland itself has a

charm which no other country possesses. Then it is such nice clean walking! However much you may curtail your skirt, *mud* will stick to it, but on the heather there is nothing to handicap you—you are almost on a level with MAN!

From the moment you leave the lodge on a shooting morning, your pleasure begins. The dogs and keepers have preceded you. A couple of gillies are waiting with the ponies. You mount, and wend your way over the hill road, ruminating as you go, on the possible bag, and taking in, almost unconsciously, the bewitching feast that nature with such a bountiful hand has spread before you.

On either side a wide expanse of moorland, one mass of bloom, broken here and there by a burnt patch or some grey lichen-covered boulders. The ground gently slopes on the right towards a few scrubby alders or birches, with one or two rowan trees, the fringe of green bracken denoting the little burn which to-day trickles placidly along, but in a spate becomes a roaring torrent of brown water and white foam. Beyond is a wide

stretch of purple heather, then a strip of yellow and crimson bents, dotted with the white cotton-flower. The broken, undulating ground, with its little knolls and hollows, tells of nice covert for the grouse when the mid-day sun is high, and the birds are, as an old keeper used to say, "lying deid in the heather."

Further away rise the hills in their stately grandeur, green, and olive, and grey, and purple ; how the light changes on them ! One behind the other they lie in massive splendour, and, more distant still, the faint blue outline of some giant overtops the rest, with here and there a rugged peak standing out against the sky. And, pervading all, that wonderful, exhilarating, intoxicating air !

Rounding a bend in the road, you come across three or four hill-sheep, standing in the shade of the overhanging bank. Startled, they lift their heads and gaze at you, then rush away, bounding over the stones and heather with an agility very unlike the "woolly waddle" of our fat Leicesters.

Anon, in the distance, you see Donald and

the dogs on the look-out for you, the dogs clustered round the keeper, a most picturesque group.

When you reach them and dismount, a brace of setters are uncoupled and boisterously tear around, till peremptorily called to order. You take your guns, etc., the dogs are told to "hold up," and the sport begins.

In a few moments "Rake" pulls up short, and stands like a rock; "Ruby" backs him. You advance slowly, always, when possible, at the side of the dog standing, and pause for your companion to come up. Rake moves forward, a step at a time, his lip twitching and his eyes eager with excitement; another second and the birds get up. Seven of them. (Here let me give the beginner a hint. Take the birds nearest you and furthest from your companion, never shoot across him, don't change your bird, and don't fire too soon.) You re-load and walk up to where they rose, there will probably be a bird left. Up he gets, right under your feet. You let him go a proper distance, then neatly drop him in the heather.

This kind of thing is repeated again and again, varied by an odd "bluehare," or a twisting snipe. The dogs quarter their ground beautifully, it is a pleasure to see them work, for grouse are plentiful, the shooting good, and they are encouraged to do their best. Perhaps there may be a bit of swamp surrounded by rushes in which an occasional duck is to be found. The dogs are taken up, and the guns creep cautiously forward, taking care to keep out of sight till within shot. You then show yourselves simultaneously on the right and left, when the birds will generally spring. Remember to aim *above* a duck—because it is always rising.

Later on in the season grouse get wilder, and the shooting consequently more amusing. The old cocks grow very wary, but sometimes, coming round the brow of a hill, you light suddenly on a grand old fellow, who, with a "Bak-a-bak-bak," rises right up into the air, turns, and goes off downwind forty miles an hour. Catch him under the wing just on the turn—a lovely shot.



If you miss him he won't give you another chance that day !

By way of variety you are sometimes bidden to assist at a neighbouring "drive" for black game and roe. On one occasion we were asked to join a party for this purpose. We set off with an army of guns and beaters, some of the former decidedly inexperienced ones. It is, of course, essential in roe-driving, that you should, when in position, keep absolutely still. It was known that two bucks with exceptionally fine heads frequented the wood, and our host was anxious to secure them. My husband was placed in a very likely place, and there, in spite of midges and flies galore, he possessed his soul in patience. Suddenly he thought he heard a footstep ; the sound was repeated, and, cautiously moving to discover what it might portend, he saw the gun stationed next him calmly patrolling up and down, flicking away the midges with his white handkerchief ! My husband didn't get that buck.

After luncheon, our party was reinforced by



the butler and the French cook. Both arrived with guns, which they carried "at the trail," at full cock 'over the roughest ground. The chef was a long, lean, lank, cadaverous man looking as if he wanted one of his own skewers run down him. He was dressed in shiny black clothes and wore *enormous* slippers. Comfortable enough, no doubt, on the *trottoir* of his "beloved Paris," but scarcely suitable for the hill! So he seemed to find, for he shortly retired, when we felt considerably happier. Another time, the best wood, the *bonne bouche*, was carefully beaten through while we were discussing a *recherché* champagne luncheon. Just as we finished, the shouts, cries, and discordant noises which denote the approach of beaters, were heard, and shortly after, one of the keepers came up and informed us that the whole wood had been gone through and that seven roe, to say nothing of a red deer had been seen! Evidently "someone had blundered." I do not myself think there is much sport in roe-driving. To begin with they are such pretty graceful animals, one cannot kill

them without remorse. Also it requires very little skill to put a charge of shot into them even at a gallop.

Nor is a grey-hen a difficult bird to kill. Heavy and slow—what Mr Jorrocks calls “a henterpriseless brute”—it flops along through the birch trees (though, when driven, and coming from some distance it acquires much greater speed), looking more like a barn-door fowl than a game bird; but the Sultan of the tribe is quite a different thing. Wild, wary and watchful, he is ever on the *qui vive*. When you do get a shot at him he is travelling by express, and having, most probably, been put up some distance off, he has considerable “way” on. You see his white feathers gleam in the sun, and the curl of his tail against the sky. Shoot well ahead of him. Ah! great is the satisfaction of hearing the dull thud as he falls, and of seeing him bounce up with the force of the contact with mother-earth. Truly, an old black-cock is a grand bird! His glossy blue-black plumage, white under-wings and tail, and red eye make such a pleasing contrast.

I remember once, when grouse-driving towards the end of the day, the beaters brought up a small birch wood which stood near the last row of butts. There were two or three ladies with us. One of them, a most bewitching and lovely young woman, accompanied a gallant soldier into his butt, to mark his prowess. As luck would have it, nine old black-cock flew over that brave colonel's butt, but, strange to say, *four* went away without a shot, and not one of the nine remained as witnesses of his skill! Now, let me point out, had that said charming girl been *shooting*, she would have been stationed in a butt by herself, and, judging by that soldier's usual performance, at least five of those old black-cock would have bitten the dust that day! And "the moral of that is"—give a graceful girl a gun!

The hill ponies are wonderfully sagacious animals. When they have been once or twice over a road, they will never mistake their way. Once, when staying in Sutherlandshire, two of us started at 10.15 a.m. We rode about four miles, before beginning to shoot,

over a very bad bit of country. There were two burns to ford, some curious kind of grips to jump, and several boggy places to circumnavigate.

We shot away from home till about 6.30, then met the ponies and started on our ride home—about nine miles. We neither of us knew the way, beyond having a vague idea as to the direction in which the lodge lay. The first part was easy enough, a narrow sheep-walk guided us, but at length that failed, and there was nothing for it but to trust to the ponies. We could only go at a foot's-pace. The September evening fast closed in, and it came on to drizzle, until, for the last two miles, we could scarcely see two yards before us, and yet those ponies brought us home—over the two fords, avoided the treacherous grips and the boggy places, never putting a foot wrong the whole way! It was long past nine when the lights of the lodge hove in sight. Truly that night's dinner was a "thing of beauty" and bed seemed a "joy for ever!"

Two days later found me keen as mustard

to scale the heights of Ben Hope for ptarmigan. It was almost the only game bird, except capercailzie, I had never shot, and I was extremely anxious to seize an opportunity of doing so. Five guns set out. We rode a considerable distance, until the ground became too soft for ponies to travel. Arrived at the foot of the hill I gazed in dismay at its steep, stony height, and felt like the child in the allegory who turns back at its first difficulty! But pluck and ambition prevailed, and I struggled gamely up, though, hot and breathless, I was forced to pause more than once ere we got even half way. We had agreed that, on no account, were we to fire at anything but ptarmigan. When we had ascended about 1300 feet a covey of grouse got up. One of the sportsmen, nay, the very one who had been foremost in suggesting that ptarmigan only should be our prey, turned round, and feebly let fly both barrels, wounding one wretched bird which disappeared into the depths below, never to be seen again! As the report reverberated through the hill, the whole

place above us seemed to be alive with the cackling of ptarmigan, and, in a moment, without any exaggeration at least twenty brace were on the wing at once, making their way round the shoulder, over the Green Corrie to the highest part of Ben Hope. I think the spectre of that grouse must haunt that sportsman yet!

Of course there were a few odd birds left, and, before we gained the top, we had each picked up one or two, though, through another contretemps, I missed my best chance. I had unwillingly, over a very steep and rocky bit of ground, given up my gun to the keeper. The moment after I had done so, two ptarmigan got up to my left, offering a lovely cross shot, and, before I could seize the gun, they fell, a very pretty double shot, to our host on my right. When we reached the summit, we found ourselves enveloped in a thick fog, although down below it was a brilliant hot day; so dense was it, that, notwithstanding we were walking in line, some of us got separated, and it must have been almost an hour before we

joined forces again. Altogether it was a hard day's work, but, having attained my object, I was sublimely indifferent to everything else.

Driving is certainly the form of shooting that requires the most skill, whether it be grouse or partridge, and is most fascinating when you can hit your birds! Grouse-driving appears to me the easier of the two; partly because they come straight, and partly because you can see them much further off, also they are rather bigger, though they may, perhaps, come the quicker of the two. Nothing but experience will show you how soon you can fire at a driven grouse coming towards you. Some people get on to their birds much quicker than others. I have heard it said that as soon as you can distinguish the plumage of the bird, he is within shot. Aim a little above him if he is coming towards you—a long way ahead if he is crossing.

If you shoot with two guns, I assume that you have practised "giving and taking" with a loader. Otherwise there will



be a fine clashing of barrels and possibly an unintentional explosion. The cap and jacket for driving must be of some neutral tint, any white showing is liable to turn the birds. Of course you must be most careful never to fire a side shot within range of the next butt. A beginner is more apt to do this, from being naturally a slow shot at first.

The same rules hold good for partridge-driving, only there you usually stand behind a high hedge, consequently you cannot see the birds approaching. You hear "Ma-a-rk" in the distance, and the next moment—whish! They are over, scattering at the sight of you to right or left; take one as he comes over you, and you may get another going away from you—or a side shot—provided there is no gun lower down whom you run the risk of peppering.

Walking up partridges in turnips affords the same kind of shooting as grouse over dogs; not bad fun when they are plentiful, but hardish work for petticoats! If a hare gets up and bounds away, the moving



turnip-tops will be your only guide to her whereabouts, aim rather low, or the chances are you fire over her back. A curious incident once happened when we were part-ridge shooting. Two hares were put up, and running from opposite directions up the same row they "collided," and with such violence that one broke its neck and the other was so stunned that it was picked up by a beater! The Irishman might with truth have said—"Man, they jostle one another." And this in spite of the Ground Game Act!

You will occasionally come across snipe in turnips. They are horrid little zig-zagging wretches! If you wait till their first gyrations are over, they do, for a second, fly straight (for them), and even a 20-bore can sometimes lay them low.

I once shot a quail. I mistook it for a "cheeper" minus a tail, and gazed placidly at its retreating form, murmuring to myself, "too small," when I was electrified by a yell—"Shoot, shoot!" Being trained to habits of obedience, I promptly did as I

was told, and brought the "little flutterer" down. A quail in a turnip field! I should as soon have expected to meet one of the children of Israel.

On a winter afternoon, *faute-de-mieux*, shooting wood-pigeons coming in to roost, is a pastime not to be despised, but it is very cold work. A windy evening is the best; luckily pigeons always fly in against the wind, so you can get on the leeseide of the plantation and shoot them coming in, or you can ensconce yourself under the shelter of some fir-boughs near the trees in which they are accustomed to roost. A pigeon takes a lot of killing, he possesses so many feathers; then he has an eye like a hawk, and can turn with incredible speed. If there are several guns in different woods you may easily get 100 in an hour or two, and often many more.

Of the grandest sport of all I grieve to say I can write nothing. I have never had the chance of a shot at a stag. It is not possible to describe a stalk by hearsay only; besides, in my remarks hitherto, I

have recorded nothing which has not come within my own actual experience.

I can, however, easily imagine the intense pleasure of being well brought up to within, perhaps, 100 yards of a good stag, the excitement of having the rifle thrust into your hands with a whispered "Tak' time," the cautious raising of the weapon to a rest, the anxious moment as you take your sight and gently press the trigger, and the supreme delight of hearing the "thud" of the bullet as it strikes, and as the smoke clears off, of seeing him stagger a few paces and fall "*never to rise again.*" I forbear to draw the reverse side of the picture.

Of course, in many forests, stalking is quite feasible for ladies, though not within reach of all. I confess I envy those fortunate individuals who have, more than once, compelled some "antlered monarch of the glen" to bow his lofty head and lower his colours at their bidding!

With regard to dress—I believe, for those who can endure the feel, wearing all wool is

a great safeguard against rheumatism, chills, and all evils of that ilk. But, on this subject, every woman will of course please herself. I will therefore merely give an outline of my own get-up. A short plain skirt of Harris tweed, with just enough width to allow of striding or jumping, a half tight-fitting jacket to match, with turn-up collar and strap like a cover-coat, pockets big enough to get the hands in and out easily, a flannel shirt and leather belt, or, for smarter occasions, a stiff shirt and waistcoat. Knickerbockers of thin dark tweed, high laced boots with nails, or brown leather gaiters and shoes. If a petticoat is worn, *silk* is the best material for walking in. I have neither mackintosh nor leather on my dress, I dislike the feel of both. For wet weather, a waterproof cape, with straps over the shoulders so that it can be thrown back, if required, in the act of shooting, is very convenient.

But there is really only one essential in a shooting costume. It **MUST** be loose enough to give the arms *perfect freedom* in *every* direction—without this, it is impossible to shoot well or quickly.

One last hint. Never go on shooting when you are tired. It will only cause you disappointment, and others vexation of spirit, for you will assuredly shoot under everything. Bird after bird will go away wounded, time after time your mentor (or tormentor) will cry "low and behind, low and behind," until, in angry despair, you long to fling the empty cartridge at his head. Take my advice "give it up, and go home!"

That the above notes may not be free from numerous sins of omission and commission, I am well aware. It would be great presumption on my part to suppose that my feeble pen could do what many men have failed to accomplish. But if any hints I have given prove of service to beginners and encourage them to persevere (even though at present, like the old woman's false teeth "they misses as often as they hits"), my pleasant task will not have been in vain.

MILDRED BOYNTON.

A KANGAROO HUNT.



## A KANGAROO HUNT.

BY MRS JENKINS.

It has been said "An Englishman is never happy unless he is killing something," and nowadays, at any rate, his happiness seems increased if members of the weaker sex share this propensity with him; and so a short account of a kangaroo hunt may not be inappropriate in a book about women's sports.

This is an exclusively Australian pastime, and has peculiar incidents of its own from the start to the finish. We do not see pink coats and heavy hunters, the bay of the hounds does not break on our ear, there are no hedges to leap, nor brooks, followed by a flounder through a ploughed field; we do not come home in a cold drizzle at the end of a delightful day, and sit near the fireside, wondering whether there will be a frost before morning, and whether the mare's legs



will last this season. No, our hunting is done under a bright sun and balmy breezes, and, though we miss the prettiness and order which accompany a meet in the "auld countree," still, there is a rugged beauty about our surroundings. The horses are well-bred, though many of them not well groomed; the riders are graceful and plucky, and the *tout ensemble* makes a fair picture to the lover of horseflesh and sport.

Well, friends have come together, the kangaroo hounds (they are a cross between the deerhound and greyhound,) are let loose and gambol round the horses, letting out short barks of satisfaction as the riders mount. Off we go. The country is hilly and thickly-wooded, logs lie in all directions, but our horses, bred in the district, pick their way, and go at a smart canter in and out of trees, and jump the logs as they come to them.

A low Hist! from the leader of the chase—he is the owner of the station—mounted on a thorough-bred bay, the hounds stand a

second with pricked up ears, and their heads high in the air, for they run by sight; then off they go, and off we go after them. The kangaroos, six in number, led by a big "old man," spring along at an amazing pace, crash goes the brushwood, here and there a hound rolls over, making a miss at a log, but, in a second, he is up again, straining every nerve of his graceful body to reach his companions. We are nearing a wire fence; will the kangaroos be caught before we come to it? If not, some pretty riding will be seen, and British pluck will be needed to carry horse and rider over a five-feet fence, topped with barbed wire. However, our courage is not to be tested this time; the fleetest hound has the "old man" by the throat, the rest of the pack come up, and in a few moments all is over. A boy skins the victim and the tail is cut off, later on to make soup.

Now we have a consultation as to which way we shall go. It is getting near luncheon time and our host wants us to camp on a pretty bend of the river, so we take our

course in that direction, spreading over a good space, and all keeping a good look-out.

We are ascending a mountain, the way is stony, and, as we go along, the scenery continually varies. Hill after hill rises before us, separated by deep gorges, all thickly timbered and abounding in ferns and flowering shrubs. The magpies warble and the thrush whistles its piping note, interrupted now and then by the shrill laugh of the jackass. But some kangaroos have been sighted, and even the most ardent lovers of scenery are at once on the alert.

Up and down hill we go, with many a slip and a scramble, horse and rider none the worse. The kangaroos rush at a tremendous speed, some of them carrying a young one in their pouch; one poor beast is so hard pressed she throws the young one out of her pouch; it hops away through the grass, to be caught later by friendly hands and carried home as a pet. No such luck for the mother, the hounds are on her and she is rolled over, and on they go again in pursuit of her fleeter companions.

A big fence has scattered them, but one, more plucky than the rest, makes a frantic spring. Alas! the quick run has been too much for his powers and he gets caught on the merciless barbed wire. The foremost rider, thinking the kangaroo would clear it, is preparing to take the fence in a flying leap, but the sight of the kangaroo caught makes the horse baulk, and crash they all come down together. With a wonderful quickness the rider rolls himself away from the fallen horse and is helping the animal up, both none the worse, except for a few scratches and a good shaking.

Everyone is now agreed that luncheon has been well earned, so we ride and drive (for a buggy and pair of ponies have been following in our tracks) to a favourite spot. And what a sight breaks on our eyes! We are in a valley, with hills towering around us, the river makes a sharp bend, along the banks are a mass of wattle trees in full bloom, the beautiful yellow flowers lighting up the dark green leaves and reddish brown bark. The sky is cloudless, and a little way off, lies

a herd of Devon cattle, quietly chewing the cud, and mildly wondering what has brought such a large party, evidently bent on play instead of work, to their retreat. We see a ripple on the still, deep, flowing water, and a platypus swims along quickly to his nest on the bank. A little lower down we hear the whirr of the wild duck, which have been disturbed by our coming.

A fire is soon lighted; one is told off to unpack the basket of good things; another grills some steak, someone else undertakes potatoes, the oldest bushman of the lot says he will regale us with "Johnnie Cakes." These are made of flour and water and a little salt, rolled very thin and cooked in the ashes, and very good they prove to be; and last, but not least, we make the tea, boiling the water in a tin pot and putting the tea into it.

In about half an hour our various cooks have all ready, and we lie about on the grass and satisfy the cravings of hunger. After that pipes are lighted and stories go round of former exploits, how wild horses have been

caught and tamed, how thousands of kangaroos have been driven into yards made for the purpose and died of suffocation in the crowd; of adventures with wild cattle and blacks, etc., etc. More serious subjects, too, are being discussed in twos and threes; for there is something quiet and soothing in the scene around, that brings to mind memories long forgotten, joys and sorrows long past, and amid this picture of peace and beauty, friends talk and open their hearts to each other, and realise the fact that nature can preach a more eloquent sermon than is heard from many a pulpit. But everything in this world must come to an end; the horses are caught and harnessed and we all jog homeward. On the way the younger spirits of the party have a gallop after stray kangaroos and bring the tails back with them as trophies.

One incident in the last chase may be worth mentioning. The kangaroos are bounding along, with the hounds and horsemen close behind them. They come to a three rail fence of heavy timber; without a miss the kangaroos take it in a flying leap and appar-

ently without any extra exertion ; over go the hounds, and the horsemen follow to a man, then the excitement increases for they are coming to a big lagoon ; splash goes a kangaroo into it and now we see a real fight. The kangaroo stands up to his neck in the water, beating about with his legs, and the hounds swim around. A young one, not knowing the danger, makes a snap at his throat, he is instantly seized in the animals arms and his back broken. Poor Daisy ! your hunting days have been short and you had yet to learn that discretion was the better part of valour. The older hounds keep swimming round, gradually coming nearer, and several at once make snaps at different parts of the kangaroo. A hand-to-hand fight takes place, the kangaroo ripping and wounding the hounds with his powerful hind claws ; but the plucky beasts keep their hold, and amid yelps of rage and pain, the splashing and reddening of the water, and the shouts of the huntsmen to encourage the hounds, the victim sinks, after a vigorous struggle for his life.

As we drive down the mountains the sun



is setting, banks of heavy clouds are rising, tinged with purple, and prophesying a thunderstorm, which is made more sure by the distant roar we hear. There is a stillness in the air, broken by the cracking of the brushwood and the ominous cry of birds. Suddenly a streak of lightning startles us, followed by a loud crash which echoes round and round. We hurry home, and only arrive just in time to escape a thorough soaking, for the rain comes streaming down.

BEATRICE M. JENKINS.





C Y C L I N G.



## CYCLING.

By MRS E. ROBINS PENNELL.

“THERE should be nothing so much a man’s business as his amusements.” Substitute *woman* for *man*, and I, for my part, cannot quarrel with Mr Stevenson’s creed. Our amusements, after all, are the main thing in life, and of these I have found cycling the most satisfactory. As a good healthy tonic, it should appeal to the scrupulous woman who cannot even amuse herself without a purpose; it has elements of excitement to attract the more adventurous. It is a pleasure in itself, the physical exercise being its own reward; it is a pleasure in what it leads to, since travelling is the chief end of the cycle. That women do not yet appreciate it at its true worth, that, as a rule, they would still rather play tennis or pull a boat than ride a bicycle, is their own great loss.

Cycling is the youngest of woman's sports. It did not come in until the invention of the tricycle, or three-wheeled machine; necessarily it was out of the question for anyone wearing skirts, divided or otherwise, to mount the tall bicycle, or "ordinary." In 1878 tricycles, invented at a still earlier date, were first practically advertised, and one of the authors of the book on cycling in the *Badminton Library* says, that already in that year "tradition told of a lady rider, who, in company with her husband, made an extended tour along the south coast; and in quiet lanes and private gardens feminine riders began to initiate themselves into the pastime." But, despite the courage of their pioneer, not until a few years later did they desert private lanes for public roads, and then it was only in small numbers. Had they been more enterprising, a serious hindrance in their way was the fact that at first makers refused to understand their requirements. The early tricycles made for us were meant to be very ladylike, but they were sadly inappropriate. It was really the tandem

which did most to increase the popularity of the sport among women. The sociable, where the riders sit side by side, was the first of the double machines, but it is an instrument of torture rather than of pleasure, as whoever has tried to work it knows to his or her cost. Its width makes it awkward and cumbersome even on good roads, and when there is a head wind—and the wind always blows in one's face—the treadmill is child's play in comparison. The tandem, on which, as the name explains, one rider sits behind the other, takes up no more space than a single tricycle and offers no more resistance to the wind, and this means far less work. Besides, for many women to have a man to attend to the steering and braking, in those early days was not exactly a drawback; but even with the tandem progress was not rapid. I remember my first experience in 1884, when I practised on a Coventry "Rotary" in the country round Philadelphia, and felt keenly that a woman on a cycle was still a novelty in the United States. I came to England that same

summer, but the women riders whom I met on my runs through London and the Southern Counties, I could count on the fingers of one hand. The Humbers had then brought out their tandem, and for it my husband and I exchanged our "Rotary," and started off in the autumn for Italy, where we rode from Florence to Rome. I have never made such a sensation in my life, and, for my own comfort, I hope I may never make such another : I ride to amuse myself, not the public. It was clear that Italian women were more behindhand than the English or Americans. There are, nowadays, more women riders in France, probably, than in any country, but in the summer of 1885, on the road from Calais to Switzerland, by Sterne's route, I was scarce accepted as an everyday occurrence.

Single tricycles improved with every year, and the introduction of the direct-steerer, or well-known "Cripper" type, assured their popularity. More attention being paid by makers to women's machines, more women were seen on the roads. Then came the greatest invention of all, the "Woman's Safety."

A certain benevolent Mr Sparrow, had, some years before, in 1880 to be accurate, built a woman's bicycle, a high one with the little wheel in front, something like the American "Star"; but the awkwardness of mounting and dismounting made it impracticable. Men had been riding the dwarf bicycle for two or three years before one was introduced with a frame that made it as suitable and possible for women. How near this brings us to the present, is proved by the fact that in the Badminton book, published in 1887, though there is a chapter on "Tricycling for Ladies," there is nothing about bicycling for them. I experimented in 1889 with a tandem safety, on which the front seat was designed for women, and then the single safety, with a dropped instead of a diamond frame, was already in the market. But it had made slight headway. In America it grew more rapidly in favour. The average road there is worse than here, and therefore the one track—the bicycle's great advantage—was much sooner appreciated. Cycling for women has never become fashionable in



the United States, but, in proportion, a far greater number of American women ride, and with almost all the safety is the favourite mount. In France also the sport is more popular with women than in Great Britain, and one might almost say that it is the safety which has made it so. Riding through Prussia, Saxony and Bavaria in the summer of 1891, I met but two women cyclists, and they both rode safeties. In England, however, women, until very recently, have seemed absurdly conservative in this matter; they cling to the three wheels, as if to do so were the one concession that made their cycling proper. A few of the more radical—"wild women" Mrs Lynn Linton would call them—saw what folly this was, and many have now become safety riders; but not the majority. Only the other day, in Bushey Park, I met a large club on their Saturday afternoon run; half the members were women, but not one was on a bicycle. This, I know, is but a single isolated instance, but it is fairly typical.

And yet the safety is the machine of all

others, which, were my advice asked, I would most care to recommend. And I would have the wheels fitted with cushion tyres—the large rubber tyre with a small hole down the centre—or, better still, with pneumatics, the tyres that are inflated with air. Both deaden vibration. The latter necessitate carrying an air-pump and a repairing kit, for if the rubber be cut or punctured, as frequently happens, the air, of course, escapes at once, and the cut or puncture must be mended and the tube blown up again, which means trouble. But the many improvements introduced make the task of repairing easier every day. My career as a bicyclist began in 1891, but, short as it may seem, I think it has qualified me to speak with authority. For my little Marriot, and Cooper's "Ladies' Safety," carried me across Central Europe, and as far east as the Roumanian frontier. My experience agrees with that of all other safety riders, men or women. The chief advantage of the machine is, as I have said, its one track, but this cannot be over-

estimated. Roads must be, indeed, in a dreadful condition if space for one wheel to be driven easily over them cannot be found. The bicyclist can scorch in triumph along the tiniest footpath, while the tricyclist trudges on foot, pushing her three wheels through the mud or sand. Moreover, there is less resistance to the wind, and in touring, it is far easier to dispose of the small light safety than of the wider machine when you put up in a little inn at night, or are forced for a time to take the train. Many a night in Germany, Austria, and Hungary did my bicycle share my bedroom with me.

The chief drawback to the safety is usually found in learning to mount and steer. I shall be honest, and admit that there is a difficulty. The tricycle has the grace to stand still while the beginner experiments, but the safety is not to be trifled with. Sometimes it seems as if a look were enough to upset it. Of course, at first, it is well to let someone hold and steady it until its eccentricities are mastered, for it is entirely

in the balancing that the trouble lies ; the mount in itself is as simple as possible. The rider stands to the left of the machine by the pedals ; taking hold of the handle bars she slowly wheels it until the right pedal is at the highest point, turns the front wheel a little to the right, and puts her right foot on the right pedal ; this at once starts the machine and raises her into the saddle, and as the left pedal comes up, it is caught with her left foot. The great thing is to have confidence in the machine ; she who shows the least fear or distrust is completely at its mercy. To dismount is as simple : when the left pedal is at its lowest point, the right foot is brought over the frame and the rider steps to the ground. If a sudden stop be necessary, she must put the brake on, not too abruptly, or she may be jerked out of the saddle.

The steering is the true difficulty in safety riding, and yet it cannot well be taught ; it must come by practice, with some very painful experiences in the coming. The obstinacy of the safety seems at first un-

conquerable. During my apprenticeship, many a time have I been going in a straight line with every intention of keeping on in it, when, without warning, my safety has turned sharply at a right angle, rushed to the ditch and deposited me there. But the funny part of it is, that the woman who perseveres, gradually, she can scarcely explain how, gets the better of its self-willed peculiarities until she has it under perfect control.

The best plan is, in the very beginning, to take a few practical lessons. There is an excellent teacher to be found at Singers' shop, in Holborn Viaduct, where a cellar paved with asphalt is kept as a school. The beginner would do well to practise there until she can at least sit up on the machine and balance it a little, and until she begins to understand the first principles of steering. At this point in bicycling education I would urge her to leave the schoolroom for the high road. If she wait until she is too far advanced on asphalt, where the machine goes almost by

itself, she may have to commence all over again on an ordinary road. She should learn what is called ankle action from the start. Once the cyclist gets into a bad style of riding it is hard for her to get out of it; and the more the ankle comes into play the less strain is there on the muscles of the legs. A good rider expends half as much energy and makes far better time than the woman who has not mastered the art. If going up hill be exhausting, why, then it is wise to walk. Going down, if the hill be long, the brake must be used from the start, and to know how to back-pedal is important. To back-pedal is to press on the pedal when it is coming up instead of when it is going down. Nothing could be more dangerous than to lose control of a machine on a down grade. Some of the most serious accidents have been the result of the rider's letting her cycle run away with her in coasting.

I have enumerated the virtues of the bicycle. As to its vices, I do not find that it has any. An objection often is raised against it because, if brought to a stand-



still by traffic or any other cause, the rider must dismount at once. But I do not count this a serious hardship; I have never been inconvenienced by it. Again, it is urged that the luggage-carrying capacity of the safety is small compared to that of the three-wheeled machine. This is truer of the woman's than of the man's bicycle, since we, poor things, must carry our knapsack behind the saddle or on the handle bars, while a most delightful and clever little bag is made by Rendell & Underwood to fit into the diamond frame of a man's safety. But, for a short trip, actual necessities—that is, a complete change of underclothing, a night-dress, and a not too luxurious toilet case—can be carried in the knapsack slung behind. For a long trip it is always advisable to send a large bag or trunk, according to the individual's wants, from one big town to the next on the route.

Luggage suggests the subject of dress, as important to the woman who cycles as to the woman who dances. A grey tweed that defies dust and rain alike, makes the perfect gown; if

a good, strong waterproof be added, a second dress will not be needed. For summer, a linen or thin flannel blouse and jacket—perhaps a silk blouse, for evening, in the knapsack—and, for all seasons, one of Henry Heath's felt hats complete the costume. For underwear, the rule is wool next the skin, combinations by choice. Woollen stays contribute to one's comfort, and each rider can decide for herself between knickerbockers and a short petticoat. There is something to be said for each. This is practically the outfit supplied by the Cyclists Touring Club for its women members. As for style, an ordinary tailor-made gown, simple rather than elaborate, answers the purpose of the tricyclist. The bicyclist does not get off so easily. Even with a suitable dress-guard, and, no matter what the makers say, the dress-guard should extend over the entire upper half of the rear wheel, there is ever danger of full long skirts catching in the spokes and bringing the wearer in humiliation and sorrow to the ground. Many strange and awful costumes have been



invented to obviate the danger—one that is skirt without and knickerbockers within; another that is nothing more nor less than a shapeless bag, when all that is needed is a dress shorter and skimpier than usual, with hem turned up on the outside, and absolutely nothing on the inner side to catch in the pedals. Now, the trouble is that for the tourist, who carries but one gown, and who objects to being stared at as a “Freak” escaped from a side show, it is awkward, when off the bicycle, to be obliged to appear in large towns in a dress up to her ankles; she might pass unnoticed in Great Britain, but on the Continent she becomes the observed of all observers. At the risk of seeming egotistic, I will explain, as I have already explained elsewhere, the device by which I make my one cycling gown long and short, as occasion requires. There is a row of safety hooks, five in all, around the waist-band, and a row of eyes on the skirt about a foot below. In a skirt so provided, I look like every other woman when off the machine. Just before I mount, I hook it up,

and I wheel off with an easy mind, knowing there is absolutely nothing to catch anywhere. I have read in cycling papers many descriptions of other women's bicycling costumes, but never yet have I discovered one which, for simplicity and appropriateness, could compete with mine.\*

On all that concerns touring, it is important to dwell, for it is in travelling on the road that women must find chief use for their cycles, and this they have had the common sense to realise. Quite a number belong to the Cyclists' Touring Club, and are among its more active members. True, a few have appeared on the path, have turned the highway into a race course, and occasionally, have broken records and done the other wonders to which I, personally, attach no

\* Since printing this, a few Englishwomen have appeared on the public roads in knickerbockers, and have made, as was to be expected, great talk in the cycling press. Frenchwomen gave them the example; in France, there is scarce a woman bicyclist who has not adopted knickerbockers, or else a sort of gymnasium dress. Of the greater comfort and safety secured, there can be no question; the chief drawback to this costume, especially for the tourist, is its conspicuousness.

value, whether they be performed by men or women. Mrs J. S. Smith, whose husband is the manufacturer of the "Invincible" cycles, has with him, on his "sociable" and tandem, run at several Surrey meetings and in other places, and her feats are included in the list of the world's records. Mrs Allen of Birmingham, once rode two hundred miles in twenty-four hours. Fraulein Johanne Jørgensen, the woman champion of Denmark, is fast breaking the records of her own country, and threatens to come over and break those of England. The ease with which Mrs Preston Davies (wife of the inventor of the Preston Davies tyre) rode up Petersham Hill, though not exactly a record, made quite a little talk among cyclists. Miss Reynolds, who rode from Brighton to London and back in eight hours, is the heroine of the day. We have even seen a team of women professionals imported from America only to meet with the failure they deserved. But, fortunately, these are the exceptions. I say fortunately, because, while I am not prudish

enough to be shocked by the mere appearance of women on the path, I do not think they have the physical strength to risk the fearful strain and exertion. If men cannot stand it for many years, women can still less. Cycling is healthy; to this fact we have the testimony of such men as Dr Richardson and Dr Oscar Jennings, whose books on the subject should be consulted by all interested; especially Dr Jennings's "*Cycling and Health*," since in his chapter on "Cycling for Women," he has collected together the opinions of leading authorities. Like everything else, however, if carried to excess, cycling becomes a positive evil.

It can be overdone on the road, but here the temptations are not so great. I know many women who have toured often and far, and are none the worse for it. There are few, however, who have taken notable rides. Mrs Harold Lewis of Philadelphia, once, with her husband, travelled on a tandem from Calais across France and Switzerland, and over some of the highest Swiss passes. In the Elwell tours from America—a species

of personally-conducted tours on wheels—women have more than once been in the party. But of other long journeys so seldom have I heard, that sometimes I wonder if, without meaning to, I have broken the record as touring wheel-woman. But the truth is, that, while every racing event is chronicled far and wide in the press, the tourist accomplishes her feats without advertisement, solely for the pleasure of travelling by cycle.

And what stronger inducement could she have? Hers is all the joy of motion, not to be under-estimated, and of long days in the open air; all the joy of adventure and change. Hers is the delightful sense of independence and power, the charm of seeing the country in the only way in which it can be seen; instead of being carried at lightening speed from one town to another where the traveller is expected and prepared for, the cyclist's is a journey of discovery through little forgotten villages and by lonely farm-houses where the sight-seer is unknown. And, above all, cycling day after day and all

day long will speedily reduce, or elevate, her to that perfect state of physical well-being, to that healthy animal condition, which in itself is one of the greatest pleasures in life.

Women have used cycles for other purposes. Doctors ride them to visit their patients, the less serious go shopping on them. Clubs have been formed here, and more successfully in America. There is at least one journalist, Miss Lilius Campbell Davidson, who is on the staff of the *Bicycling News* and the *Cyclists' Touring Club Gazette*. But, when all is said, the true function of the cycle is to contribute to the amusement and not the duties of life, and it is in touring that this end is best fulfilled.

ELIZBAETH ROBINS PENNELL.



P U N T I N G.





## PUNTING.

By MISS SYBIL SALAMAN.

THAT punting is an art, and a very graceful one, was borne in upon me late one hot, lazy, summer afternoon, while idly musing under the verandah of a houseboat on the upper Thames, and from that day to this, one of my most ardent desires has been to become an expert punter. It was in the prettiest reach on the river, just above the lock, that the houseboat lay. The sun was setting behind the trees, and tinting with a rosy glow the mist that was creeping up from the bank. Perfect peace was over the scene, and did not Nature abhor silence as much as she does a vacuum, I might almost say that silence rested upon the river. But birds sang, now and then a fish would jump, curl its silver body in the air, and return to its watery home with a splash, the mooring chains of the houseboat were grating as the

river rippled by, and in the distance was the hissing sound of the weir. Suddenly there came a noisy intrusion, the peacefulness was disturbed, the air was full of discordant voices and the irregular splashes of ill-managed oars, for the lock-gates had opened and let loose a crowd of noisy, scrambling, Saturday half-holiday folk. Happily, they soon passed by, and the sound of their incongruous chatter and laughter, and intermittent splashing followed them out of my ken, and then all was quiet and peaceful again, and I was left gazing dreamily at the disturbed fishes darting about in the shallow water where the houseboat lay.

Presently a gentle rippling sound caused me to look up. A girl was punting past, there was no splashing, no scramble, apparently no effort. The girl never moved from where she stood, only her body swayed backwards and forwards on her pole, easily and evenly, and the long straight craft glided by, answering to every touch. I hardly realised then that this slim, graceful girl was doing all the work herself, it looked so easy and

simple. The water bubbled aloud under the bow of the punt, and the girl's shadow floated on the water, the red sunlight lay like a pathway before her, and the ripples seemed to part to make way for her as she brought her punt steadily along. She made a lovely picture, and I watched her as she went down the river, in the rising mist and the sunlight, marvelling at the straight line she kept, watching the monotonous motion of the pole rising and falling, and listening almost unconsciously for the hollow ring of the shoe striking on the hard ground, till a sudden bend in the river took her out of sight, though, for some time, I still saw the top of her pole over the bushes rhythmically rising high in the air and disappearing from view. From that moment I decided to be a punter—this girl was once only a beginner—surely, I thought, there was hope for me.

I need not dwell on all my personal experiences—there is a great sameness about the first efforts of all punters, they all go round in circles. But there are certain hints which beginners will do well to follow.

First of all they must not be discouraged by the inevitable clumsiness of their first endeavours, the ease and grace of punting comes only after much experience.

To the girl who wishes seriously to become a punter, it is far better, having once understood the principle by which a punt is propelled and steered, to go out and struggle alone. If someone is always by to take the pole from her, should any difficulty arise, she will not gain that independence which is so absolutely essential to every punter.

Just a word as to dress.

A good punter can dress as she pleases, but all beginners get wet ; no one can teach them how to avoid this until they have acquired a certain style. Therefore I should recommend a serge skirt, not too long, that will stand any amount of water, a loose blouse, with sleeves which can unbutton and roll up ; shoes with low heels, and, for preference, india-rubber soles, as they prevent slipping if the punt be at all wet.

As in rowing and sculling the work in punting is distributed all over the body, and does

not only exercise the arm, as so many beginners imagine. In punting, all the weight of the body should be thrown back on the pole with the push, which, by the way, should never be given until the shoe has gripped the ground. This brings into play all the muscles of the back, shoulders, and arms, also the hips. This upright position is attained by swinging the body back on the pole when the shoe has gripped the ground, while one foot is firmly planted a little in advance, and the other leg rests behind with bended knee, thus enabling the arms to be kept nearly straight and the hands well over the water.

Punting in this stationary position is technically called "pricking." Of the different styles of punting I shall speak more fully later on.

The greatest difficulty for the beginner is to keep the punt straight, but to achieve this it is only necessary to be always watching the bow of the punt, and to remember that whichever way the top of the pole points, the bow will run in the opposite direction. In steering there are, practically speaking, two strokes—

in one the pole is thrown in away from the side of the punt, which brings the bow in towards the bank, and in the other the pole is dropped in under the bottom of the punt, which turns the bow away from the bank. A punter, by the way, always punts from the side nearest the bank. But the steering should not be perceptible, and must never be allowed to detract from the strength of the stroke. It is effected, as I have said, by the angle at which the pole is thrown in, and also by the position of the shoe on the ground at the finish of the stroke. The direction of a punt with "way" on is altered by the slightest touch.

The very bad habit of steering with the pole behind off the ground, using the pole as a rudder, is never practised by good punters. In very deep water, or in a strong stream, it must either break or strain the pole, and it is not nearly so quick or effectual a way of steering as the proper method I have described.

There are two ways of punting, known respectively as "pricking" and "running."

Roughly speaking "running" is more general on the upper river, that is, above Windsor, and "pricking" on the shallower and less muddy waters of Staines and Sunbury; though "pricking" is much more popular in all parts of the river than it was a year or so ago—very few people "run" punts below Maidenhead now.

For "running" all the weight should be in the stern. The punter must not go too far forward up the bow or she will stop the "way" of the punt. A steady pressure should be kept up while walking down the punt once the pole is thrown into the water, and a strong push given at the finish in the stern. If the pressure is too great at the commencement of the stroke, by the time the stern is reached the bow will have run out into the stream, so that, at the finish of the stroke, too much force has to be used to bring the punt in again. This detracts from the speed and causes a zig-zag course. As in "pricking," there should not be too much steering. It is impossible, in "running" a punt, to steer entirely without the effort being perceptible.



Against a strong stream and wind, and with a heavy load it is often far easier to "run." For "pricking," the punter assumes a stationary position in the stern, about a third of the way up the punt and facing the bow, while all the weight to be carried is put in front of the punter. The pole must never be reversed to bring the punt in or out, but kept the same side, that is, in the shallow water nearest the bank. The pole should be thrown in as near the side of the punt as possible without scraping it each time. This enables the punter to keep an upright position, and exert more force than if the pole were held far away from the punt.

A pole is taken out hand over hand, and should be recovered in as few movements as possible. In racing especially a quick recovery is a very great advantage. It should be taken out in two movements in shallow water, so that a fast punter would be ready to throw in her pole for the next push before a punter with a slow recovery had taken her pole out of the water. Of course, in very deep water, two movements will be found impossible.

In an ordinary way, and going up stream, the pole is thrown about opposite to with the body, but going down, in a very strong stream the pole should be thrown in some way in advance of the body, otherwise the punter loses her grip on the ground in consequence of the stream carrying the punt so rapidly on that the pole floats uselessly out in the stream, and no time is given for the push. A punt can be stopped dead by reversing the pole—not to the opposite side of the punt, but by throwing it in in the opposite direction to that in which the punter is pushing. A punt is sometimes considered somewhat awkward to turn, but the distance of her own length is nearly enough in reality if she is turned properly! When the “way” on her is stopped the pole should be thrown in the other side, across the deck—the shoe pointing a long way off from the punt, so that the pole slants right across, the punter facing the stern. This stroke repeated once or twice will turn a punt almost in her own water.

When crossing strong streams, the bow must be kept well up against the stream, or

the current will carry the punt right round. In a strong wind the same precaution is necessary. It is sometimes easier in much wind to push the punt backwards—the stern foremost, the punter standing in the bow. A punt is not so much influenced by the wind with all the weight in front, and is therefore easier to keep straight. If the bow is out of the water, it is blown from one side to the other, and it is often very difficult to steer. In the wash of a steamer punters should keep away from the bank, or the punt may be swept on to it, when it will probably ship water.

In going over new ground, it is well to be prepared for mud or loose shingle. If there has been any dredging, the ground is always loose, and it is easy to lose one's balance if quite unprepared for the ground crumbling away under a hard push. The same thing takes place with an unexpected deep hole, where the pole is flung in and cannot reach the bottom.

If a punter be always prepared for these things, there is no danger, but an unthinking

beginner is apt to throw in her pole fiercely, and on finding it stuck fast in the mud, she will probably fall in herself if she clings to it valiantly but foolishly. Never cling to a pole therefore—rather let it go. For this reason, or in case of accidentally breaking a pole, punters should always carry an extra one in the punt.

Some people have straps on the outside of their punts for extra poles, but these are apt to be a nuisance in locks, and they spoil the trim and neat appearance of a punt. Beware of a wooden bottom to a lock, for the shoe of the pole may stick fast in the wood and the bow of the punt swing round across the lock-gates.

A punt has one great disadvantage.

In a lock full of boats, perhaps half the number of people do not know how to manage their own boats, and have not the least idea how to get out of the lock. Therefore they are apt to dig their boat-hooks into the nearest punt, if they can, and expect to be towed out. So, while looking out for a wooden bottom to the lock, beware also of

those "boat-hooks fiends" who do not think it necessary to learn how to manage their boats so long as they can splash about with a pair of sculls, and trust to a punter guiding them safely out of locks.

Keep the pole between the punt and the side of the lock to avoid the greasy sides.

Double punting, that is two persons punting together simultaneously, is very effective on the river. To do this the punter may stand in various ways, but I consider the best is for both punters to stand in the stern, almost back to back, one a little in advance of the other, to set the stroke. This necessitates hardly any steering, for, with a pole on each side, the punt will keep itself straight if both strokes are of equal strength. In turning, the inside one should hold the punt steady, while the other pushes—the punt will then turn as on a pivot.

Some people stand at opposite ends of the punt, with both poles one side, but I cannot recommend this method, because too much weight is then thrown on to one side, and a punt will not travel well unless properly

balanced. In all double punting little or no steering should be required if both work well together. But wherever the punters may stand, the most important point is to keep time—perfect time. This is a *sine qua non* in all good double punting. Nothing looks so bad as to see two persons double punting when quite regardless as to time.

Both poles must be recovered together and in the same number of movements, otherwise it looks a scramble, and the poles appear to be of different lengths.

The principle of steering is, of course, the same in double punting as in “pricking” and “running,” only that here the work is divided, the business of one being to bring the bow in, the other to take it out. Punters must never interfere with each other’s stroke, and never seem to be waiting. If the last stroke has been too strong, so that it has sent the punt out of the ordinary course, or not strong enough, so that she has run in, the punter should not wait till her fellow punter’s stroke has corrected the fault, but should throw in her pole in time with the other, even if no

pressure be required at all, just to keep the time. The strongest punter should be at the back, if there be any difference.

Punts vary from the heavy fishing ones to the narrow and unsteady racing craft. But a useful punt for ordinary work is about 3 feet wide and 26 feet long. The seat is arranged about 3 to 4 feet from the deck, allowing just room for the punters to stand. This is, of course, intended for "pricking" from the stern. A semi-racer, to hold one person besides the punter, is about 22 inches or 2 feet wide, about 27 feet long. A racing punt about 16 or 17 inches wide and from 30 to 32 feet long.

Really the most important item to a punter is the pole, though many inexperienced people give all their attention to their punts, while they think almost any pole will do, in which they are very much mistaken. The pole is, if anything, more important than the punt itself. For my own part, I prefer to any other a made pole about 15 or 16 feet long. For hard work and long distances this is certainly the best. Great attention must be



paid to the shoe. If the prongs be too close they will pick up stones continually, and probably split the pole or break. The best shoe for ordinary work is shaped something like a horse-shoe, but the prongs must not incline inwards on account of stones. The prettiest and most graceful shoe is one with rather long prongs, not too close, made of nickle-plated iron. The shoe should always be heavy enough for the pole. Poles are made of various woods, and steel tubing has been tried, but these, however, have not been found very practical. Larch poles are apt to splinter, red larch are better, but they are not very strong, and they are very difficult to obtain, while they are seldom quite straight. Bamboo poles are very well for a calm river, with little or no stream, but they are not much use for hard work, they are so light that they are always inclined to be top-heavy. All bamboos should have very heavy shoes, and even then they must be heavily weighted in addition. It is almost impossible to get them heavy enough at the bottom. A pole should sink at once, and not require pushing



down. It will be found that a bamboo has to be held down, or it will rise of its own account and float out, giving no time for the push. They are considered unbusiness-like by serious punters. But sometimes at regattas they are found useful. The Henley course, for instance, is very deep all the way along the meadow side, even quite near the bank, therefore a long pole is necessary, and these are apt to be very tiring and heavy when punting all day. A bamboo must never be left out in a hot sun when it is wet, or it will crack between the joints and when put back into the water will fill, so that the water runs out over one's hands and arms. But of whatever kind the pole may be it must be properly balanced, and not top-heavy. The lightest punt will not make up for a badly-balanced pole. In racing this should be remembered. It is customary to "prick" from the middle of the punt in racing. A stroke called the overhand push is much used for speed. After the first push is given, and the pole is bent with the chest, without moving the back foot, only the heel of the

front one, and, turning the body, a second push is given. The advantage of this is that the punter is able to push twice without taking the pole out of the water, and a longer swing of the body is accordingly obtained. When women race, they do so in ordinary punts, not in racing punts. There are not many punting races open exclusively to ladies; in fact, as far as I can ascertain, they are only included in the programmes of the regattas at Goring and Streatly, at Wargrave and at Cookham, and the Thames Ditton and Hampton Court Aquatic Sports. At the Maidenhead and Taplow Town Regatta there is a Lady's and Gentleman's Double Punting Race, and there is some talk of a Ladies' Punting Championship competition being inaugurated at Maidenhead.

In spite of the paucity of punting races for ladies, however, there are several ladies in various parts of the Thames whose style and speed have won for them something more than local renown. For instance, at Staines, there are Mrs Hamilton, Miss Kilby and Mrs George Hunter; at Maidenhead,

Miss Ethel Lumley and Miss Annie Benningfield; at Bray, Miss Maud Lumley; at Hampton, Miss D. Hewitt, who in '91 won the Ladies' Punting Competition at the Hampton Court and Thames Ditton Aquatic Sports. In addition to these, there is Mrs Sharratt of Surly Hall Hotel, better known, perhaps, as Miss Ada Morris, the daughter of the lock-keeper at Bray, who has the reputation of being one of the best punters, if not the best, on the Thames. Some people punt Canadian canoes, but this, though pretty when well done, does not come under the heading of serious punting.

The practice of paddling punts is often indulged in on crowded courses, such as Henley in the regatta week, but this I need hardly say is never done by good punters. Even there it is far better to use a long pole.

In conclusion, I think I may say that there is no prettier sight on the whole river than a girl, neatly dressed, punting well and gracefully; but, like riding, it is an exercise which must be done well. A hot-looking girl struggling with her pole is a spectacle that

must excite anything but admiration from either the river or the bank. Good style and ease, so important in punting, come only after much practice.

SYBIL SALAMAN.

THE END.

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